



House of Commons  
Environmental Audit Committee

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# Marine Protected Areas Revisited

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**Tenth Report of Session 2016–17**

*Report, together with formal minutes relating  
to the report*

*Ordered by the House of Commons  
to be printed 21 March 2017*

## Environmental Audit Committee

The Environmental Audit Committee is appointed by the House of Commons to consider to what extent the policies and programmes of government departments and non-departmental public bodies contribute to environmental protection and sustainable development; to audit their performance against such targets as may be set for them by Her Majesty's Ministers; and to report thereon to the House.

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The following Members were members of the Committee during the inquiry:

Margaret Greenwood MP (*Labour, Wirral West*)

### Powers

The constitution and powers are set out in House of Commons Standing Orders, principally in SO No 152A. These are available on the internet via [www.parliament.uk](http://www.parliament.uk).

### Publication

Committee reports are published on the Committee's website at [www.parliament.uk/eacom](http://www.parliament.uk/eacom) and in print by Order of the House.

Evidence relating to this report is published on the [inquiry publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

### Committee staff

The current staff of the Committee are David Slater (Clerk), Lauren Boyer (Second Clerk), Tom Leveridge (Senior Committee Specialist), Tom Glithero (Committee Specialist), Emily Purssell (Committee Researcher), Ameet Chudasama (Senior Committee Assistant), Baris Tufekci (Committee Assistant), and Nicholas Davies (Media Officer)

### Contacts

All correspondence should be addressed to the Clerk of the Environmental Audit Committee, House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA. The telephone number for general enquiries is 020 7219 5776; the Committee's email address is [eacom@parliament.uk](mailto:eacom@parliament.uk).

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## Summary

The 2015 Conservative Party Manifesto committed to “complete the network of [Marine Conservation Zones] MCZs”.<sup>1</sup> Yet only 50 MCZs have been designated so far—well short of the 127 sites originally recommended by the regional projects in 2011. To fulfil this commitment, the third tranche of MCZs must be considerably larger and more ambitious than the previous two. The delay is unacceptable and we call on the Government to put in place this final piece of the MPA jigsaw as soon as possible.

Without effective management, surveillance and monitoring our MPAs are just lines on a map. Once a site is designated then its status as a MPA should be made the primary consideration for management and decision-making. The Government must act to protect MPAs properly by implementing a robust and well-coordinated management strategy. The Government should also consider investing in aerial and seaborne drones. We are shocked and disappointed by the Government’s decision to exclude reference areas from the third tranche of MCZs. Without reference areas the Government will be unable to properly assess how well the MPA network is performing.

The level of ambition shown by the FCO in designating MPAs in the UK Overseas Territories (UKOTs) has vastly exceeded ambitions in domestic waters - due in part to the very different circumstances. British seabirds off the Chagos Islands are better protected than they would be flying off Cornwall. However, many of the management problems experienced in domestic waters have been replicated in the UKOTs. The Government must now take action to ensure these sites are effectively resourced and managed.

The Government’s communications strategy in both the UK and the UKOTs is still ineffective and unsatisfactory, this is despite our predecessor Committee raising this as a concern in 2014. The lack of progress on this issue is self-defeating, as poor communication continues to make the process of designation and enforcement unnecessarily contentious.

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1 Conservative Party, [Conservative Party Manifesto 2015](#), 54

# 1 Introduction

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1. Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) are areas of the sea that are partially or fully protected from damaging activities. MPAs aim to protect the marine environment and to allow for recovery or conservation of marine habitats, features and species. Marine Conservation Zones (MCZs) form one component of the MPA network. In contrast to other UK MPAs, MCZs may reflect the social and economic impacts of designation in the selection of sites.<sup>2</sup> The other components of the network are Special Areas of Conservation (designated under the EU Habitats Directive), Special Protection Areas (designated under the EU Wild Birds Directive), Ramsar sites (designated under the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands) and Sites of Special Scientific Interest (designated under the Wildlife and Countryside Act). The UK has currently designated 50 MCZs and 267 MPAs that meet at least one of the ecological criteria outlined under the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic (OSPAR).<sup>3</sup>

2. The Conservative Manifesto committed to “complete the network of MCZs” and to create a ‘Blue Belt’ of protected sites around the UK Overseas Territories.<sup>4</sup> The UK has also made a series of international commitments relating to MPAs, including commitments under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), OSPAR and the Marine Strategy Framework Directive. The Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 requires MCZs to form a network with other UK MPAs that “contributes to the conservation or improvement of the marine environment in the UK marine area”.<sup>5</sup> The habitats and species that the network protects must represent the full range that exist in the UK marine environment, whilst reflecting that conservation might require the designation of more than one site. The Government are required to report to Parliament every six years on the extent to which MCZs and the MPA network are achieving their objectives, the first of these reports was published in 2012.<sup>6</sup>

3. Four regional projects were created in 2009 to recommend potential MCZ sites; over one million stakeholders came together to recommend 127 sites which covered 15% of waters under Defra’s jurisdiction.<sup>7</sup> The Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) and Natural England examined the evidence base for these proposals. Their scientific advice, published in July 2012, indicated that these 127 sites represented “good progress” towards the achievement of an ecologically coherent network.<sup>8</sup> To date, only 50 of these MCZs have been designated. Designation has taken place in two tranches, with 27 sites designated in the first tranche and a further 33 in the second tranche. A third tranche of MCZs was originally expected to be designated in 2018, but there is now “a chance it could slip into 2019”.<sup>9</sup> The Government have stated that they intend for this third tranche to help complete their contribution to creating an Ecologically Coherent Network in the North East Atlantic.<sup>10</sup>

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2 Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009, [section 117](#)

3 Joint Nature Conservation Committee, [The UK OSPAR Marine Protected Area Network](#), accessed 22 March 2017

4 Conservative Party, [Conservative Party Manifesto 2015](#), 54

5 Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009, [section 123](#)

6 Defra, [Report to Parliament on the Marine Protected Areas Network](#), 2012

7 Joint Natural Conservation Committee, [127 Marine Conservation Zones Recommended](#), accessed 22 March 2017

8 JNCC and Natural England, [Advice to Defra on recommended Marine Conservation Zones](#), 2012, 111

9 Q 216

10 DEFRA ([MPA 0038](#)), 5

4. Responsibility for MPA management is split across various different organisations. In waters under Defra’s jurisdiction, fishing activities within 6 nautical miles are managed by Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities (IFCAs), whilst the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) have responsibility for licensing other marine activities and for fisheries management beyond 6 nautical miles. These organisations are able to implement bye-laws and voluntary measures to protect designated MPA features from potentially damaging activities. The designation orders for MCZs confer duties on public authorities to “carry out their functions in such a way as to further or, if this is not possible, to least hinder the achievement of the conservation objectives of the sites”.<sup>11</sup> Once a site is designated as an MPA its conservation objectives must be taken into account when considering licence applications. The Government are advised on marine conservation by the statutory nature conservation bodies. The JNCC give advice in offshore waters (beyond 12 nautical miles) and Natural England provide advice in inshore waters (within 12 nautical miles).

5. MPAs have also been created in some of the UK’s 14 Overseas Territories (UKOTs). The UKOTs contain diverse marine habitats and an estimated 90% of the biodiversity found within the UK and the Territories combined.<sup>12</sup> Our 2014 report on *Sustainability in the Overseas Territories* noted that Aichi Biodiversity Target 11 (agreed by all 193 Parties to the CBD) requires at least 10% of coastal and marine areas to be “conserved through effectively and equitably managed, ecologically representative and well connected systems of protected areas” by 2020.<sup>13</sup> Our report recognised that the UK could make a substantial contribution to this target by designating more MPAs in the UKOTs.<sup>14</sup> To date, MPAs have been established in the British Antarctic Territory, the British Indian Ocean Territory, South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands and the Pitcairn Islands. In September 2016, St Helena declared a sustainable-use MPA, whilst the Ascension Island Government has agreed to establish an MPA that covers at least half of its maritime zone by 2019.

## Our Inquiry

6. Our inquiry follows on from the previous Committee’s reports into *Sustainability in the UK Overseas Territories*<sup>15</sup> and into *Marine Protected Areas*.<sup>16</sup> Our previous MPA report criticised the slow pace of designation and lack of ambition in the first tranche of MCZs.<sup>17</sup> It argued that the Government must improve co-ordination and management immediately by setting out “management plans for individual MCZs, and an overarching strategy for MCZ management”.<sup>18</sup> The aim of this inquiry is to follow-up on the recommendations made in our previous reports and to assess the progress that the Government has made in designating, implementing and enforcing MPAs in both the UK and the Overseas Territories.

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11 Environmental Audit Committee, [First Report of Session 2014–15](#), Marine protected areas, HC 221, 5

12 Overseas Territories: [Security, Success and Sustainability](#), FCO, 2012, 8

13 United Nations, Convention on Biological Diversity, [Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020](#), Aichi Biodiversity Target 11

14 Environmental Audit Committee, [Tenth Report of Session 2013–14](#), Sustainability in the UK Overseas Territories, HC 332, 43

15 *Ibid*

16 Environmental Audit Committee, [First Report of Session 2014–15](#), Marine Protected Areas, HC 221

17 *Ibid*

18 *Ibid*

7. We held four evidence sessions and questioned a range of experts including academics, environmental groups, industry representatives and the management organisations. We received 38 pieces of written evidence. A full list of witnesses can be found at the end of this report. We are grateful to everyone who gave evidence to this inquiry. We would also like to thank our specialist adviser James Marsden, former Director, Marine at Natural England.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Declaration of interests: Committee member and Bye-Law Sub-Committee Member of Devon & Severn Inshore Fisheries & Conservation Authority. Trustee/board member and Chair of Conservation Committee of the Marine Conservation Society (stepped aside for duration of this inquiry). Member of Brecon Beacons National Park Authority. Trustee/board member of Herefordshire Wildlife Trust. Life member of Marine Conservation Society, British Trust for Ornithology, Herefordshire Wildlife Trust and Royal Society for the Protection of Birds.

## 2 Designation

8. The Government stated that it intends for the third tranche of MCZs to help complete its “contribution to the Ecologically Coherent Network in the North East Atlantic”.<sup>20</sup> We heard that to achieve this, the Government would have to designate an ambitious third tranche of zones.<sup>21</sup> Only 50 of the 127 originally recommended MCZs have been designated to date. This is despite the statutory nature conservation bodies stating that designation of all 127 sites would constitute “good progress” towards the achievement of an Ecologically Coherent Network.<sup>22</sup> Consequently, witnesses felt that there were still a number of gaps in the network, particularly for sites to protect sand, mud and highly mobile species.<sup>23</sup>

9. In October 2016 the JNCC undertook an analysis of the existing MPA network and concluded that:

Some gaps remain in the existing MPA network in [Secretary of State] waters. These gaps could be addressed through a combination of adding additional features to existing MCZs, designating some of the remaining recommended MCZs from the Regional MCZ Projects, and identifying a small number of new site options.<sup>24</sup>

In November 2016 the statutory nature conservation bodies undertook a consultation on potential site options for Tranche 3. The options discussed included many of the sites recommended by the regional projects, some new areas to protect mobile species and some new areas of search, suggested in order to fill the gaps identified by the JNCC. The Marine Conservation Society argued that these “50-odd sites” were needed “to complete the job. We are very, very supportive of those sites all being set up”.<sup>25</sup>

10. During the course of this inquiry, our witnesses reiterated previous concerns that the evidence bar for MCZ site selection was set too high.<sup>26</sup> At the start of the MCZ process the Government committed to making decisions based on the “best available evidence”, stating that “lack of full scientific certainty should not be a reason for postponing proportionate decisions on site selection”.<sup>27</sup> This was the standard adopted by the regional projects when making site recommendations. However, the Government reversed this decision after the Science Advisory Panel raised doubts about the strength of the evidence base for some of the 127 sites that were originally recommended.<sup>28</sup> They announced that whilst *site recommendations* could be based on the best available evidence, *site designations* would require ‘adequately robust’ levels of evidence.<sup>29</sup> This led the House of Commons Science and Technology Committee to conclude that the Government had “moved the

20 DEFRA (MPA0038), 5

21 The Wildlife Trusts (MPA0029), Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust (MPA0024), Wildlife and Countryside Link (MPA0023), WWF-UK (MPA0015)

22 JNCC and Natural England, [Advice to Defra on recommended Marine Conservation Zones](#), 2012, 111

23 Q 1

24 JNCC, [Assessing progress towards an ecologically coherent MPA network in Secretary of State Waters in 2016: Results](#), 2016, 3

25 Ibid

26 Q 38

27 Defra, [Guidance on selection and designation of Marine Conservation Zones \(Note 1\)](#), 2010, 8

28 Defra, [Science Advisory Panel Assessment of the Marine Conservation Zone Regional Project Final Recommendations](#), 2011

29 HC Deb 15 November 2011, [col 36WS](#)

goalposts” on evidence requirements during the MCZ selection process.<sup>30</sup> Despite both this Committee and the Science and Technology Committee recommending that the Government select sites on the basis of the ‘best available’ data,<sup>31</sup> we heard that Defra were “still requiring full scientific certainty for designation of sites, despite little or no investment in the gathering of further evidence to support [this]”.<sup>32</sup>

11. Dr Frost of the Marine Biological Association argued:

I am always very concerned about how evidence-intensive this process is becoming ... The UK [is] one of the top places in the world for marine scientific research... yet we are still always being hauled over the coals with wanting more and more information.<sup>33</sup>

He noted that we will never “get to the stage where we can tick the evidence box” and expressed concern that the lack of perfect evidence may be used as a perpetual excuse not to move forward with MCZs.<sup>34</sup> Witnesses argued that the Government needed to be more realistic about evidence requirements.<sup>35</sup>

## Mobile Species

12. A number of witnesses argued that a complete network must include sites to protect mobile species, including sites for birds, mammals and fish.<sup>36</sup> These sites aim to safeguard areas critical to the life cycle of these animals (such as breeding, nursery and feeding areas). In May 2016 the Government released a consultation calling for third-party proposals on MCZs for highly mobile species with guidance from the statutory nature conservation bodies.<sup>37</sup> Stakeholders were given six weeks to put together proposals, including all the required supporting information and maps.<sup>38</sup> We heard that this was an unrealistic timeframe, which limited the number and quality of sites proposed.<sup>39</sup> Jeff Knott of the RSBP told us that:

A combination of that very short timescale of just a few weeks and the very high evidence bar that was set for being able to propose sites meant that we, as a community, really were not able to bring forward the number of sites that would be required to deliver a true ecologically coherent network.<sup>40</sup>

They argued that the Government’s failure “To invest in research to identify important areas, instead relying solely on the work of [third] parties” meant that even if all proposed sites were adopted “the UK network will still fail to protect essential areas for mobile species”.<sup>41</sup>

30 Science and Technology Committee, [Ninth Report of session 2012–13](#), Marine science, HC 727, para 23

31 Ibid; Environmental Audit Committee, [First Report of Session 2014–15](#), Marine protected areas, HC 221

32 RSPB ([MPA0025](#)), 70

33 Q 38

34 Ibid

35 Marine Conservation Society, ([MPA0035](#)), para 1.3

36 Q 8

37 JNCC and Natural England, [Identifying possible Marine Conservation Zones for highly mobile species: Principles for third-party proposals](#), 2016

38 Ibid, 1.7

39 Q 16, RSPB ([MPA0025](#)), Wildlife Trusts ([MPA0029](#)), Wildlife and Countryside Link ([MPA0023](#))

40 Q 16

41 RSPB ([MPA0025](#))

## Devolution

13. As marine nature conservation policy is devolved, Defra also has to co-ordinate work with the devolved administrations. The Government has recognised the importance of coordinating effectively with the devolved nations to establish a coherent network of MPAs. In 2012 a Joint Administration Statement noted:

There is a strong scientific case for an assessment of a marine protected area network to be based on biogeographic regions rather than administrative regions ... we are actively working across the UK administrations to agree on an approach which links all marine protected area programmes in the UK.<sup>42</sup>

14. We heard that “there has to be a sensible, joined-up, co-ordinated approach in these areas so that protected area networks benefit the ecology of the area as a whole”.<sup>43</sup> This is particularly important as fish and highly mobile species, such as cetaceans and seabirds, are not restricted by national or territorial boundaries.<sup>44</sup>

15. However, our previous report noted that “although each Administration is following the ‘OSPAR principles’ for designing MPA networks ... each has interpreted these differently and is taking a different approach to identifying marine protected areas under national legislation”.<sup>45</sup> For example, analysis of what constitutes an Ecologically Coherent Network uses slightly different criteria in each of the four administrations.<sup>46</sup> Witnesses expressed particular concern that “in the south-west... the sites proposed have effectively been cut off on the jurisdictional boundaries through the sea”.<sup>47</sup>

**16. It is essential that the UK has a well-coordinated and ecologically coherent network of Marine Protected Areas. The Government aims for the third tranche of MCZ to help complete its “contribution to the Ecologically Coherent Network in the North East Atlantic”. To fulfil this ambition, the Government must put forward an ambitious third tranche of MCZs and improve cross-border collaboration. However, the current evidence threshold for MCZ designation set by Defra is unreasonably high. Despite having one of the best marine evidence bases in the world, evidence for some features in recommended MCZs cannot reach the standards set by Defra. Defra have exacerbated this problem due to their unwillingness to provide adequate investment for the gathering of further evidence.**

**17. As it stands, the network fails to adequately protect mobile species, sand, and mud habitats. Although we welcome the Department’s recent call for third party proposals on Tranche 3 zones for mobile species, we believe that the six-week timeframe and high evidence threshold placed unrealistic expectations on respondents, limiting the quality and number of submissions received**

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42 Defra, DOE, Scottish Government, Welsh Government, [UK Contribution to Ecologically Coherent MPA Network in the North East Atlantic](#), 2012

43 Q 8

44 Ibid

45 Environmental Audit Committee, First Report of Session 2014–15, [Marine protected areas](#), HC 221, 48

46 Q 8

47 Ibid

18. *The Government should not make perfection the enemy of the good by using a lack of 'perfect data' as an excuse to delay the designation of sites. The Government must adopt a precautionary principle approach to Tranche 3 site selection and designations should be made using 'best available' data. In selecting the third tranche of MCZs, Defra Ministers must take note of the statutory nature conservation bodies' 'gap analysis' and ensure it fills all the gaps identified. This must include designation of sites to protect both sand and mud habitats and sites for mobile species. The third tranche must be considerably more ambitious and larger than the two previous tranches, bringing the total number of MCZs much closer to the 127 zones originally recommended. Given the time that has elapsed since the 127 zones were identified, we are concerned by the delay in designating all the sites that will be required to achieve an Ecologically Coherent Network. The Government has indicated that the timescale for the third tranche may slip even further. We think this is unacceptable, and call on the Government to bring forward proposals as soon as possible*

### 3 Management Measures

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19. Whilst designating MPAs is important, their benefits will only be realised if these areas are also effectively managed. Since 2013, the IFCAs and the MMO have been working to implement over 30 existing bye-laws that apply between 0 and 12 nautical miles. The IFCAs have also put in place 27 new by-laws and 13 voluntary measures.<sup>48</sup> However, our witnesses expressed concern about the adequacy of current management arrangements. Professor Roberts argued:

We are building a world-class network of paper parks. There is virtually no management in them and there is very low ambition for management. The most damaging activities continue in most marine conservation zones.<sup>49</sup>

We heard that sites designated as MPAs were still at threat from development and that protection of sites had been “watered down” to allow development projects to go ahead.<sup>50</sup> The Wildlife Trusts argued:

If a site is designated then its standing as a MPA should be the primary consideration in management and decision-making. At present we don’t believe that this is how Government currently views sites ... We believe there are already a number of MCZs currently at risk from development including Goodwin Sands (aggregate dredging); Cromer Shoal (cable installation); the Manacles and Cumbria Coast (breakwater construction); and Allonby Bay (tidal lagoon).<sup>51</sup>

However, John Tuckett Chief Executive of the MMO, defended the marine licencing process stating:

There will be a rigorous assessment of the impact and discussions between the applicant who has applied for the licence, NGOs and statutory advisers. We will do all we can to find a way through to grant a licence with conditions that protect the environmental features of the MPA and allow the activity to go ahead.<sup>52</sup>

20. To deter illegal activity, it is essential that once licensed, activities are monitored and licencing conditions enforced. However, we heard that the Government’s current monitoring and surveillance regime created a “vener of marine protection while not actually delivering any”.<sup>53</sup> John Tuckett of the MMO argued that MPA enforcement was ‘intelligence-led’ and claimed that “we are not getting a huge lot of intelligence that suggests there is non-compliance”.<sup>54</sup> However, between 2010 and 2013 at sea inspections fell from 1415 to 633 and we were told that management organisations had become too reliant on the “actions of concerned citizens”.<sup>55</sup> For example, it was local people in Whitsand Bay who discovered licence breaches by a dredging company.

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48 Defra ([MPA0038](#))

49 Q 42

50 Terri Portmann ([MPA0019](#))

51 The Wildlife Trusts ([MPA0029](#)), 19

52 Q 187

53 Terri Portmann ([MPA 0019](#))

54 Q 182

55 Terri Portmann ([MPA0019](#))

21. There has also been slow progress in approving an inshore vessel monitoring system (VMS) that would be suitable for tracking smaller inshore vessels. All vessels above 12 metres in length are statutorily obliged to have operational VMS on board as part of the Common Fisheries Policy Control Regulations. Smaller vessels below 12 metres in length are not currently required to have VMS on board, but the MMO have recently completed a project to identify suitable inshore vessel monitoring systems. Witnesses argued that implementing VMS on smaller vessels would “aid compliance” and “support the identification of important fishing areas which may have relevance to marine spatial planning”, providing a means of “high frequency, low cost reporting”.<sup>56</sup>

***22. Whilst designating MPAs is important, their benefits will only be realised if they are effectively managed. Once a site is designated as an MPA, the MMO and the IFCAs should make this the primary consideration in management and decision-making. It is essential that the Government put in place strong monitoring and surveillance regimes to deter illegal activity. The Government must establish a fully integrated monitoring and surveillance regime. To achieve this, the management organisations should approve an inshore vessel monitoring system suitable for tracking smaller vessels. The Government should also consider investing in aerial and seaborne drones. The Government should integrate intelligence from inshore VMS into the current VMS hub, so that all information can be viewed centrally.***

## Funding

23. Some of our witnesses raised concerns that the ability of the MMO and the IFCAs effectively to manage and enforce MPAs would further deteriorate due to increasingly constrained budgets.<sup>57</sup> The MMO’s budget has been cut from £32.0 million in 2010/11 to £17.0 million in 2015/16 (a cut of 46%), whilst its regulatory role is increasing as additional MCZs are designated.<sup>58</sup> The third and final tranche of MCZs is expected to be the largest and to include sites with more complex management requirements. This will put more pressure on the already constrained budgets of the management organisations. The Association of IFCAs argued that “The number and complexity of the network will inevitably place great strain on the resources available to the IFCAs”.<sup>59</sup> They emphasised the importance of securing ‘sustainable’ funding streams to establish a meaningful network of sites.<sup>60</sup>

24. Two-thirds of IFCA funding comes from local government and one-third comes from Defra.<sup>61</sup> The Marine and Coastal Access Act requires local Authorities to cover the costs of the IFCAs.<sup>62</sup> Local authorities were given additional funding to cover the extra costs associated with the creation of the IFCAs. The total cost to the funding authorities was just over £8.7m in the 2014/15 financial year.<sup>63</sup> This funding is distributed unequally

56 Association of Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities ([MPA0006](#)), 8

57 WWF ([MPA0015](#)), Association of Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities ([MPA0006](#)), Wildlife Trusts ([MPA0029](#)), Wildlife and Countryside Link ([MPA0023](#)), National Federation of Fishermen’s Organisations ([MPA0019](#))

58 Environmental Audit Committee, First Report of Session 2014–15, [Marine protected areas](#), HC 221, Q114; Marine Management Organisation Annual Report and Accounts for the financial year ended 31 March 2016, Defra, 19

59 Association of Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities ([MPA0006](#)), 7

60 Ibid

61 Ibid

62 Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009

63 Association of Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities ([MPA0006](#)), 3

across the 10 IFCAs according to a funding formula. There is no obligation on local authorities to allocate all or any of the New Burdens Funding to the IFCAs. Although most local authorities have allocated the full sum, some have not. Dr Bolt explained that:

There are three IFCAs that have not received the full amount of the New Burdens Funding, which is not ring-fenced. Two of them are relatively minor amounts, almost certainly withheld for administration purposes. The bone of contention is in Devon and Severn.<sup>64</sup>

The five northern local authorities in the Devon & Severn IFCA have withheld a total of £455,200, including the proposed budgets for 2017. This equates to an average of 9.3% of the IFCA's total budget being withheld annually.<sup>65</sup> We heard that this:

Represents a significant challenge to the IFCA. For instance, £65k would fund two additional FTEs [full time equivalent staff], which would significantly increase the capability of the IFCA to both implement and enforce the coherent network of MPAs within their region.<sup>66</sup>

25. The MMO receives key funding from the European Union. The MMO told us that “we have improved our understanding of European funding streams to ensure we can make best use of available funding”.<sup>67</sup> Over the last three years, the MMO has received £2,191,000 from the European Union: £995,000 for fisheries enforcement, £422,000 for data collection and at least £774,000 from the European Fisheries Fund, which is now the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF).<sup>68</sup> Leaving the EU means this funding is now at risk. The Treasury has only guaranteed EU funding for EMFF-funded projects signed after Autumn Statement 2016 which are “good value for money” and “in line with domestic strategic priorities”, but has not given any more detail about what those criteria mean.

26. We questioned John Tuckett of the MMO about the MCZ budgets. He told us that the vast majority of cuts have been to the MMO's surveillance contract with the Royal Navy, which is principally used to ensure that fisherman are in compliance with the Common Fisheries Policy. He argued that MPAs on the other hand were mainly monitored by vessel monitoring systems and local intelligence and felt that this meant:

The effort that we are putting into marine protected areas monitoring and surveillance has not been affected by those budget cuts and, if anything, it has gone slightly up rather than gone down.<sup>69</sup>

**27. We are very concerned that funding cuts to the MMO and the IFCAs will place great strain on their ability effectively to manage and enforce the MPA network. The designation of the largest and most complex tranche of MCZs in 2018/19 will put further pressure on them.**

64 Q 159

65 Association of Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities ([MPA0041](#))

66 Ibid

67 Defra, [Marine Management Organisation Annual Report and Accounts for the financial year ended 31 March 2016](#), 19

68 WWF-UK ([MPA0015](#)), 5.3.

69 Q 168

**28. In response to this report, the Government should provide its assessment of any additional budget and resources that will be provided to the MMO and the IFCAs to enable them effectively to manage the third tranche of MCZs and designated MPAs. The Government should look at using revenues raised by the aggregates levy to fund marine protection. If the Government is not prepared to provide extra resources, it should set out what consultation it has had with these bodies and provide evidence which shows that the considerable additional responsibilities can be met within existing budgets. The Government should also ensure all IFCAs receive the full funding they are entitled to and that the MMO's budget is not cut further. The Government should commit to make up any loss of EU funding to the MMO as a result of Britain's exit from the European Union.**

## Reference Areas

29. Some witnesses said that the MPA network would only be complete if it included reference areas (otherwise known as Highly Protected Marine Areas), where no extractive,<sup>70</sup> depositional<sup>71</sup> or human-derived disturbing or damaging activities were allowed to take place. Professor Wynn stated that “genuine reference areas are absolutely essential, not just from a scientific point of view but from a conservation point of view”.<sup>72</sup> Removing these impacts could restore a MPA to its ‘reference condition’—the non-impacted state that would arise without human intervention. Of the 127 originally proposed MCZs, 65 contained reference areas, although this represented less than 2% of the area of the recommended MCZs. Defra noted that reference areas were one of the “most controversial” aspects of the MCZ recommendations.<sup>73</sup> It committed to taking “a fresh look at requirements for reference areas”.<sup>74</sup> Due to this, none of the MCZs designated to date contain any reference areas.<sup>75</sup> This stands in stark contrast to the UKOTs, where extensive Highly Protected Marine Areas are being established - albeit in very different marine and socio-economic conditions.

30. Defra have commissioned an evaluation from the Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (CEFAS) on these ‘Highly Protected Marine Areas’. The Government stated that the outcomes of this study would be used to select sites and features for future designation.<sup>76</sup> However, the Government now maintain that they will not include reference areas within the third tranche of MCZs—regardless of the conclusions of the CEFAS report.<sup>77</sup> Dr Coffey told us that “previous Ministers made that decision and I

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70 Acts that involve the temporary or permanent removal, by intentional or unintentional means, of any living organisms or non-living materials or natural features from the marine environment.

71 Acts that involve the intentional or unintentional laying down, movement or discharge of living or non-living materials or substances into the marine environment. This includes deposition of materials such as rocks, gravel or sand, building of structures, and release of any polluting or toxic or chemical substances, as well as discharge of ballast, untreated human waste, biodegradable and industrial waste and the discard of fish offal and by-catch.

72 Q 54

73 Defra, [Marine Conservation Zones: Consultation on proposals for designation in 2013, Summary of Responses](#), July 2013

74 Ibid

75 There are however, a few small no-take areas within other UK MPAs. In Lundy, Flamborough Head and Lamlash Bay the taking of all seafood is prohibited in order to further nature conservation.

76 Defra, [Report to Parliament on the Marine Protected Areas Network](#), 2012, 59

77 Q 238

saw no reason to change it for tranche 3”.<sup>78</sup> This is concerning, given that the Government maintains the final tranche will complete its contribution to the ecologically coherent network in the North East Atlantic.<sup>79</sup>

31. The statutory nature conservation bodies recognised ‘reference conditions’ as an important benchmark to help us understand the impact of human activities.<sup>80</sup> Many of our witnesses agreed, arguing that reference areas are needed to demonstrate “what marine protected areas can do”<sup>81</sup> and “what the ecosystem can regenerate towards”.<sup>82</sup> The RSPB argued that:

If we do not have any, then we cannot truly assess how the network is performing, because all we are doing is comparing sites that are degraded to different degrees.<sup>83</sup>

The knowledge gained from reference areas can be utilised to help inform management decisions in the rest of the network. We heard that these areas could “provide all the management targets, because they will tell us what a non-impacted area looks like”.<sup>84</sup> This could in turn help improve the Government’s communication strategy, as these areas would showcase the potential benefits of MPAs. Dr Peter Jones, reader in Environmental Governance at University College London, suggested that communication could be further improved by moving away “from the title ‘reference areas’, call them something a bit more inspiring like restoration areas or recovery areas”.<sup>85</sup>

32. Recent studies have highlighted the conservation benefits of these Highly Protected Marine Areas. One such study found increases in; the body size of animals, the amount of offspring and species diversity.<sup>86</sup> The same study found an average growth of 446% in the biomass of fish, invertebrates and seaweeds.<sup>87</sup> These benefits were also shown to “‘spill over’ into the areas beyond MPAs”.<sup>88</sup> Professor Wynn also emphasised that recovery areas would have practical advantages as they would be much easier to manage:

Trying to work out what gear is being used by an individual vessel, on an individual site... is very labour intensive. If it is a very clear-cut, no take zone, it means that the management in the longer term is much easier to implement and it is potentially much cheaper.<sup>89</sup>

33. Other witnesses argued that reference areas were contentious “Given the potentially significant impacts on socioeconomic activities”.<sup>90</sup> The Royal Yachting Association expressed concern at the idea that reference areas may be included within the third

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78 Ibid

79 Defra ([MPA0038](#)), 5

80 Natural England and JNCC, [Marine Conservation Zone Project: Ecological Network Guidance](#), 2010

81 Q 42

82 Q 17

83 Q 19

84 Q 52

85 Q 54

86 HM Government, [The Government’s strategy for contributing to the delivery of a UK network of marine protected areas](#), 2010, para 20

87 Ibid

88 Ibid

89 Q 54

90 Royal Yachting Association ([MPA0033](#)), para 4.8

tranche.<sup>91</sup> Witnesses argued that the original 65 recommended reference areas were “not practical”,<sup>92</sup> “poorly designed”<sup>93</sup> and based on insufficient research. This reflected the concerns of the statutory nature conservation bodies who noted that there was a “shortfall on the overall composition, design and viability of the recommended reference areas”.<sup>94</sup> Many of the originally recommended sites were also in areas of intense inshore use. We heard that this poor choice of original sites may have generated unnecessary opposition. To overcome this opposition, the Marine Conservation Society suggested selecting larger, “less contentious”, offshore sites.<sup>95</sup> We were also told that the proposals for the initial reference areas were “very rushed” and came “very much at the end” of the regional process.<sup>96</sup> Dale Rodmell, of the National Federation of Fishermen’s Organisations argued that at the time of the original consultation the evidence base “was very limited. A lot of the information we had on habitats was just model data. That situation is changing now”.<sup>97</sup> He suggested that any future plans for reference areas be developed “in collaboration with the stakeholders who are affected in the particular sites concerned”.<sup>98</sup>

34. Witnesses also proposed selecting a smaller number of sites, but undertaking “very detailed monitoring” in them.<sup>99</sup> These sentiments were echoed by industry representatives, including Peter Barham of the Seabed User and Developer Group who noted that any reference areas “need selecting carefully . . . on the basis of good science”.<sup>100</sup> He argued that they must be “studied properly so we can see what happens in the seabed if you do nothing with it at all”.<sup>101</sup>

**35. We are shocked and disappointed by the Government’s decision to exclude reference areas from the third tranche of MCZs. Despite commissioning a study from the CEFAS on ‘Highly Protected Marine Areas’, it appears that the Government has already made up its mind not to include reference areas within the MPA network. The Government seem content to compare sites which are degraded to different degrees, failing to understand what the ecosystem can regenerate towards. Without reference areas the Government will be unable to establish an effective and coherent MPA network, as they will have no benchmark against which to assess the effectiveness of management measures. Whilst we recognise the initial concerns of various industry representatives, we believe that these could be alleviated with proper consultation and selection of a smaller number of carefully chosen sites.**

**36. *The Government should recognise that reference areas are an essential component of any ecologically coherent and well-managed network of MPAs. Therefore, to complete the network, the Government must commit to establishing reference areas within MPAs in each biogeographic region, using best available evidence assessed against the Ecological Network Guidance criteria. The Government must consult those likely to have an interest in the sites selected.***

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91 Ibid

92 Q 17

93 Q 54

94 JNCC and Natural England, [Advice to Defra on recommended Marine Conservation Zones](#), 2012, 8

95 Q 18

96 Q 71, Q 72

97 Q 72

98 Q 71

99 Q 19

100 Q 81

101 Ibid

37. *Reference areas provide the Government with a means to assess how well the MPA network is performing and help them to understand the potential for recovery in the absence of human activities. This data should then be utilised to provide management targets for other sites. Given the problems with the current MPA communications strategy, reference areas must be utilised to showcase the potential benefits of MPAs. We believe that these areas should be called ‘recovery areas’ rather than ‘reference areas’ to more accurately reflect the conservation objectives of these sites.*

38. *The Government must publish the outcomes of the CEFAS study and, if it chooses not to proceed with reference areas, it must outline what other forms of data will be used to assess progress against conservation objectives.*

## Coordination

39. Our 2014 report concluded that “The Government should identify a clear lead agency to drive effective co-ordination of protected areas”.<sup>102</sup> The Government response claimed that Defra is leading on strategy and co-ordination.<sup>103</sup> However, current management structures for MPAs are still complex, due to the number of organisations and bodies involved and their interlocking responsibilities. For example, whilst fishing activities within 6 nautical miles are managed by the IFCAs, licensing of other marine activities within this zone is undertaken by the MMO. The MMO also have responsibility for fisheries management and marine licensing beyond 6 nautical miles.

40. Stakeholders perceived this system to be cumbersome and lacking clarity.<sup>104</sup> John Tuckett of the MMO agreed that the system was complex, stating “If you were starting again from a blank sheet of paper, would you end up where we are now? The answer is probably not”. He further argued that:

looking ahead to the future and what comes after Brexit, when we are out of the EU there could be an opportunity for looking at a lot of this again in terms of how to set up a system within a UK-only legislative framework that could get rid of some of the complexities.<sup>105</sup>

However, Dr Stephen Bolt of the Association of IFCAs argued that if the system was to be simplified:

I would not want to see the IFCA model, which is quite unique in its engagement with the local communities and so on, lost in the simplification.<sup>106</sup>

## European Union

41. Many UK MPAs, such as Special Protection Areas and Special Areas of Conservation (known together as European Marine Sites, of which there are over 200), have been designated under the EU Birds and Habitats Directives. Dr Coffey explained that these

102 Environmental Audit Committee, First Report of Session 2014–15, [Marine protected areas](#), HC 221

103 Environmental Audit Committee, [Marine Protected Areas: Government response to the Committee’s First Report of Session 2014–15](#), 18

104 Wildlife and Countryside Link ([MPA0023](#)), para 4.2

105 Q 192

106 *Ibid*

sites would be transferred into English law via the Great Repeal Bill.<sup>107</sup> She told us the Government did not intend to remove any “designations or any protections”, but emphasised that no final decisions had been made as to how this process would be carried out.<sup>108</sup> European Marine Sites (EMS) and MCZs are currently selected under different criteria. Wildlife and Countryside Link explained:

The legislation underpinning MCZs requires the network of MCZs to represent the range of marine flora and fauna in UK waters, while the location of EMS must be chosen solely on scientific grounds relating to the presence of relevant habitats or species. Another difference is that EMS selection is not affected by the existing or potential socioeconomic uses of an area.<sup>109</sup>

42. Some respondents suggested that exiting the EU provides an opportunity to create a clearer and easier to manage system, for example by merging EMS and MCZs.<sup>110</sup> However, other respondents including the Marine Conservation Society advised against amending the Habitats Regulations “under the guise of ‘improving’ it”.<sup>111</sup> They believed that “this may result in watering down key objectives, in particular Article 6 which is critical to their conservation”.<sup>112</sup> Article 6 of the Habitats Directive requires plans or projects to be subject to Habitats Risk Assessments. Wildlife and Countryside Link also argued that it was important for the UK to continue to have sites which protect habitats and species of both European and national importance as this would help “improve the health of the marine environment as a whole... and build resilience against current and future pressures”.<sup>113</sup>

43. Other witnesses were concerned that accountability mechanisms may be lost upon leaving the EU.<sup>114</sup> The current EU governance structure allows successive governments to be held to account for environmental actions, and provides a backstop against the shifting priorities of different national Governments. This is because citizens are able to challenge Government policies in the European Court of Justice. Dr Frost cited the example of Greenpeace’s court case against the UK Government:

When the European legislation was originally transposed into UK law, the UK Government argued that it only applied out to 12 nautical miles. Greenpeace were able to take the UK Government to court and argue that it was applicable out to 200 miles, and indeed it was the European Court that found against the Government and said that the habitats directive applied to the UK continental shelf up to a limit of 200 nautical miles.<sup>115</sup>

And under the Habitats Directive the Government is required to report to the European Commission on the condition of all EMS every six years. The Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust argued:

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107 Q 200

108 Q 200

109 Wildlife and Countryside Link ([MPA0023](#)), para 5.3

110 Blue Marine Foundation ([MPA0030](#))

111 Marine Conservation Society ([MPA0035](#)), para 5.1

112 Ibid

113 Wildlife and Countryside Link ([MPA0023](#)), para 5.2

114 Q 6

115 Q 45

In the past, infringement proceedings have been an important way to ensure proper implementation of EU protection in the UK ... .once the authority of the European Courts is revoked, the Government should implement a new monitoring, reporting and enforcement strategy to ensure that the law is properly upheld.<sup>116</sup>

44. However, as Dr Harper noted, even after leaving the EU the UK is bound by international commitments relating to MPAs. For example, the UK is required under the Marine and Coastal Access Act and the OSPAR convention to report on MPAs and to provide assessment of the UK's progress towards an ecologically coherent network.<sup>117</sup> However, the enforcement mechanisms for these obligations were considered to be weaker. Peter Jones explained that this relied on “political pressure” as it is “almost impossible—to end up in the UN court for breaching a convention”.<sup>118</sup> Dr Frost said “I do have some concern over the oversight of these things. Who is going to be managing them? Who is going to be holding people to account if we do not meet the objectives that we have said we will meet?”<sup>119</sup>

45. Leaving the EU may also make it easier to for the Government to make unilateral decisions about management measures for MPAs beyond six nautical miles, as they would no longer need to seek permission from other European States via the Common Fisheries Policy. Peter Jones argued that Europe had become “littered with paper MPAs simply because [of] the Common Fisheries Policy”.<sup>120</sup> He explained that:

We have thousands of marine protected areas in waters that are subject to the Common Fisheries Policy, but we still have less than 10 restrictions under the Common Fisheries Policy specifically focused on marine protected areas.<sup>121</sup>

This has resulted in some sites beyond 6 nautical miles being designated, but lacking any management measures. However, these purported advantages may be limited by historic fishing rights and any renegotiation of quota shares negotiated as part of the exit arrangements.

46. As the negotiation processes could take two years or more, we heard that it was important “to prevent a paralysis in effective action” whilst the Government was negotiating the terms of exit.<sup>122</sup> Defra told us that “for existing sites the negotiations with other Member States on these management recommendations will be completed in advance of the UK's exit from the EU”,<sup>123</sup> and Dr Coffey further explained that the Fisheries Minister, George Eustice, was developing a Green Paper which may elaborate on these plans.<sup>124</sup>

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116 Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust ([MPA0024](#)), 26

117 Q 202

118 Q 47

119 Q 45

120 Q 44

121 Ibid

122 Q 45

123 Defra ([MPA0038](#))

124 Q 207

*47. The Government should ensure that all European Marine Sites are transferred into English law via the Great Repeal Bill and that reporting, monitoring, evaluation and enforcement structures are preserved and set out in a new Environmental Protection Act, or Fisheries Act. To contribute to the health of the marine environment as a whole, the Government must continue to designate sites to protect habitats and species of both European and national importance. Designation does not guarantee protection so the Government should ensure that this is carried out in such a way that retains or improves upon the level of environmental protection and enforcement currently provided in the EU. The Government must work with other member states to ensure that management recommendations are in place for all designated MPAs before the UK leaves the EU. It must ensure that the process of exiting the EU does not create paralysis in establishing effective management measures in MPAs beyond 6 nautical miles. If the Government withdraws from the Common Fisheries Policy, it should recognise that there are likely to be significant changes to the management of offshore MPAs. In light of this, it should undertake a review of current management arrangements, with a view to creating a less complex management system.*

## 4 Communication

48. Over one million interested parties participated in the regional projects that recommended sites for designation. Witnesses argued that, after involving the public in the MCZ selection process, it was important that “the Government continues to engage closely with them throughout the remainder of the process”.<sup>125</sup> However, our 2014 report concluded that the Government had “not yet got its communications right”.<sup>126</sup> We argued that insufficient communication about the MPA network and its associated benefits created a risk of unnecessary stakeholder resistance.<sup>127</sup> DEFRA told us that since our report the consultation process had improved:

Since the first tranche there has been continued stakeholder engagement on prospective sites to improve understanding of the potential social and economic implications and how any negative impacts might be minimised. For the second tranche, potential sites were discussed with stakeholders at a number of events and meetings before the consultation.<sup>128</sup>

Despite this, witnesses to our inquiry repeatedly emphasised that the Government’s approach to communication was still inadequate.<sup>129</sup> The North Sea Marine Cluster argued that:

We are missing a trick. This is the biggest marine experiment we have ever conducted. It is huge and very exciting but it is not really being conveyed as such to the public at large. There is room for ... broader engagement.<sup>130</sup>

49. There was a widespread view that information was both fragmented and overly complicated, making it “still too difficult for people, other than specialists, to navigate the various information sources about MPAs”.<sup>131</sup> This situation was perceived to have “deteriorated since the last inquiry”.<sup>132</sup> Information about MPAs is now split across various locations, with separate information contained on the websites of the JNCC, Natural England, DEFRA, the MMO and individual IFCAs - who have no common approach to publishing information. The North Sea Marine Cluster argued that even within these different websites information could be difficult to locate:

On the MMO site there are three or four different parts you have to navigate. There are two interactive maps that do not seem to speak to each other. There is information on one site about the spatial location of an MPA and on another site you find some information about what is being protected.<sup>133</sup>

Some witnesses criticised available information for being overly complicated and “couched in highly technical terms”.<sup>134</sup> The Wildlife Trusts believed that:

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125 Wildlife Trusts (MPA0029) para 6

126 Environmental Audit Committee, [First Report of Session 2014–15](#), Marine Protected Areas, HC 221, para 24

127 Ibid

128 Defra (MPA0038), para 17

129 Q 21, Q 60, Q 84, Q 85, Q 86, Q 87, Royal Yachting Association (MP0033), North Sea Marine Cluster (MPA0016), National Federation of Fishermen’s Organisations (MPA0019)

130 Q 85

131 Q 87, Q 60, North Sea Marine Cluster (MPA0016), National Federation of Fishermen’s Organisations (MPA0019)

132 National Federation of Fishermen’s Organisations (MPA0019), 16

133 Q 87

134 North Sea Marine Cluster (MPA0016)

We have to do more to make it more accessible, because at the moment the consultations around the tranches has been near-enough impossible to take part in, because it is complicated, it is full of science and it is just difficult.<sup>135</sup>

50. Witnesses emphasised that there was potential to be more imaginative in terms of how the Government communicate the benefits of MPAs to the general public. The Marine Conservation Society stated:

They are perhaps rather traditional in the way they have communicated about those sites. “Here is a list of species. Here is a list of habitats. We are protecting them”. Maybe more video would be useful, and more interviews with stakeholders would be useful.<sup>136</sup>

In Scotland for example, they have already produced two short films about their MPA network and the features it is protecting. Dr Harper told us that progress was being made on this issue and that:

Natural England and JNCC [are] working hard to translate that technical scientific advice into something that is much more user-friendly, testing that out with web platforms infographics and videos.<sup>137</sup>

Some progress has also been made by individual IFCAs, for example the Devon & Severn IFCA have been coordinating with Natural England to provide MPA information on signage along the newly opened Coastal Path section near Minehead.

**51. MPAs should be the jewels in Britain’s crown and seen as national parks of the sea. Raising awareness of MPAs amongst the general public should be an important part of the programme’s implementation both in the UK and in the Overseas Territories. The Government needs to do a better job of promoting the benefits of marine protection. Despite this Committee having identified this as a concern in 2014, the Government’s communications strategy is still unsatisfactory. Information is both fragmented and overly technical and the Government has made little progress in using innovative methods to communicate the benefits of MPAs. An improved communications strategy is vital given that the third tranche of MCZs is likely to contain some of the most controversial sites.**

**52. *To gain support from stakeholders, the Government needs to implement a robust communications strategy that aims to raise awareness of the MPA network amongst businesses and the general public. This improved communications strategy should be implemented alongside consultations for the third tranche of MCZs. The Government must develop a consolidated central source of MPA information and be more creative in the ways that it communicates information about the network. The Government should ensure that its plans for marine protection are fully set out in its forthcoming 25 year plan for the environment. The IFCAs and the MMO should work together with Natural England to provide information about MPAs along the entire length of the Coastal Path. The Government must ensure it consults with stakeholders at a local level to secure widespread support for designations.***

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135 Q 21

136 Q 20

137 Q 234

## 5 Overseas Territories

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### Designation

53. In September 2016 the Government committed to establish 4 million km<sup>2</sup> of MPAs in the Overseas Territories by 2020.<sup>138</sup> The Government told us that it was committed to “working with the Overseas Territories to deliver a demonstrable increase in the protection of marine biodiversity by 2020”.<sup>139</sup> Witnesses were generally positive about the progress made designating MPAs in the UKOTS. However, the UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum emphasised that it was important not to have “prolonged delays between the announcements and the actual passage of legislation”.<sup>140</sup> Whilst extensive no take areas have now been established in the UKOTS, only 7.5 km<sup>2</sup> of the UK exclusive economic zone is fully protected from fishing. Some witnesses expressed concern at the “glaring disparity between the pace of progress in the UK Overseas Territories—in terms of overall area of sea protected - and the pace of marine conservation at home”.<sup>141</sup> Jeff Knott from RSPB told us “we have ended up in a situation where the FCO is perhaps slightly showing up DEFRA at the moment in the scale of its ambition, and the slightly weirder position where British seabirds off the Chagos Islands are better protected than they would be flying off Cornwall”.<sup>142</sup>

54. The extent of biodiversity existing in the UKOTs is less well documented than biodiversity in the UK. Our previous report argued that data on marine biodiversity in the UKOTs was underdeveloped as there was a “lack of basic survey data”.<sup>143</sup> Whilst available data varies from territory to territory, we heard that “some territories just do not have any baseline information”<sup>144</sup> as “no focused deep sea research has been conducted to date in any of the UKOTs”.<sup>145</sup> The UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum argued that significant progress had been made on marine biodiversity research in British Gibraltar Territorial Waters “as a direct result of the unilateral actions carried out by HM Government of Gibraltar (HMGoG) rather than HM Government”.<sup>146</sup> Without enhanced monitoring, Defra cannot accurately report to the CBD on the full extent of biodiversity in the UKOTs or measure progress towards the UN 2020 target to halt biodiversity loss. Further, we heard that enhanced monitoring could be used to improve MPA management. Dr Jon Copley argued:

At present, we have no idea what seafloor habitats and deep-sea species are actually being protected in the majority of our new MPAs ... Some marine survey work has been supported so far by NGOs, but it is limited to shallow SCUBA depths and cannot reach the much larger deep-sea areas of the MPAs... you cannot monitor or manage what you have not yet observed.<sup>147</sup>

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138 Defra ([MPA0038](#))

139 Ibid

140 UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum ([MPA0005](#))

141 Blue Marine Foundation ([MPA0030](#))

142 Q 9

143 Environmental Audit Committee, [Tenth Report of Session 2013–14](#), Sustainability in the UK Overseas Territories, HC 332, 30

144 Q 120

145 Zoological Society of London ([MPA0032](#))

146 UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum ([MPA0040](#))

147 Dr Jon Copley ([MPA0007](#))

The UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum argued that “involving the community in monitoring and data-collection would be true innovation”, but noted that the UKOTs needed support to make this happen.<sup>148</sup>

## Consultation

55. Inadequate consultation was also considered to be an issue in the Overseas Territories. Falklands Conservation and other respondents stated that information wasn't being shared effectively enough with the UK Overseas Territories. The Government of Gibraltar argued “To date there has been very limited consultation between [the UK Government and the Government of Gibraltar] regarding MPAs (if any)”.<sup>149</sup> To achieve buy-in and widespread support for MPAs it is important that the Government consults extensively with the Overseas Territories. The UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum argued:

It is obviously particularly top-down and that will not ... work in coastal communities. It just is not going to happen, so there has to be some feeding in of civil society into this exercise.<sup>150</sup>

56. *To gain support for the MPA network, the Government must ensure that it consults more effectively and transparently with Governments and local communities in the Overseas Territories. It should ensure that any concerns of the UKOTs are given due consideration before designating MPAs in their waters.*

## Management

57. Although the FCO has made substantial progress in designating MPAs, the ‘blue belt’ will only be effective if MPAs are properly resourced, managed, monitored and enforced. The UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum argued that it would be hypocritical for the Government “to reap international recognition for being a trend-setter in sustainable marine management without putting in the full work to achieve that status”.<sup>151</sup>

58. However, the designation of such large scale and remote MPAs presents surveillance and enforcement challenges. We heard that management measures in the Overseas Territories had been variable. Catherine Wensink of the UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum argued that “in some cases they are ... not being effectively managed and support is needed, be that technical or financial resources”.<sup>152</sup> For example, we heard that in Turks and Caicos MPA resources are “so low that even fuel for taking boats out just isn't there”.<sup>153</sup>

59. Technological advances in satellite tracking could be used to improve surveillance in the UKOTs. For example, Project Eyes on the Seas (EOS) was trialed in Pitcairn reserve from January 2015 to March 2016. The Pew Trusts explained that this technology works by merging “satellite tracking and imagery with other sources of information, such as fishing vessel databases and oceanographic data” enabling enforcement agencies to identify and monitor unlawful activities in global waters” giving enforcement agencies more

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148 UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum ([MPA0040](#))

149 HM Government of Gibraltar ([MPA0022](#))

150 Q 116

151 UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum ([MPA0005](#)), 24

152 Q 106

153 Q 107

actionable intelligence.<sup>154</sup> They argued that this “is helping officials detect illegal fishing activity more effectively, and indeed more cheaply, than reliance solely on physical assets, such as patrol vessels”.<sup>155</sup> We heard that these technologies can improve monitoring and surveillance, but that they “are not a silver bullet” as there is a need to follow up effectively on enforcement for MPAs to be effectively protected.<sup>156</sup> To deter illegal activity in MPAs it is essential to have strong enforcement mechanisms in place. The Zoological Society of London noted that although surveillance of MPAs in the UKOTs is already producing actionable intelligence “follow-up enforcement is required, needing government support and capacity”.<sup>157</sup>

**60. Designation of an MPA is only the first step. MPAs will only be effective if they are properly resourced, managed, monitored and enforced. Many UKOTs lack the necessary resources to effectively manage their MPAs.**

**61. *The Government must provide support to the UKOTs to help them properly detect and deter illegal activities. The Government must explore ways of strengthening surveillance and monitoring, to help detect illegal fishing activities in resource-poor UKOTs.***

## Funding

62. Sufficient funding needs to be available effectively to monitor and enforce Marine Protected Areas in the Overseas Territories. The Zoological Society of London argued that:

Funding across all [UKOTs] must be addressed urgently, as it underpins fundamentally the ability to designate MPAs, and subsequently implement management/enforcement ... “The scarcity of capacity and resources is a continuing handicap to implementing biodiversity conservation in UKOTs” ... “conditions given by funding bodies place too much strain on UKOTs and CDs ... to allow for long-term continuity and success”.<sup>158</sup>

63. The UK Government currently provides around £2 million of funding for environmental projects in UK Overseas Territories every year via the Overseas Territories Environment and Climate Fund (Darwin Plus). Darwin Plus was established in 2012 to provide funding for environmental projects in the UKOTs. The Government has also pledged £20 million over the next four years to support the implementation, management, surveillance, monitoring and enforcement of these new MPAs in the UKOTs. This additional funding was generally welcomed, however we heard that “a comprehensive marine research programme for the UKOTs is still required; and this is beyond the scope of the recently announced £20m”.<sup>159</sup>

64. After the UK leaves the EU, the UKOTs will lose their status as Overseas Countries and Territories (OCTs) of the EU. This will affect the funding of environmental policies, because as OCTs, the UKOTs are eligible to apply for various EU funding measures. One

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154 The Pew Trusts ([MPA0009](#))

155 Ibid

156 Q 116

157 Zoological Society of London ([MPA0032](#))

158 UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum ([MPA0005](#)), 16

159 Zoological Society of London ([MPA0032](#)), 32

significant source of funding which will no longer be available is European BEST funding. BEST currently provides approximately 1/3 of all environmental project funding in the UKOTs. Witnesses told us “our overseas territories will be lost without this money” and that it was essential for the UK to “commit to replacing this very effective environmental funding to at least the same level post-Brexit”.<sup>160</sup>

65. The marine environment in the UKOTs could be further protected by grants derived from the National Lottery. The Heritage Lottery Fund currently funds conservation projects in the UK and it is legally permitted to fund conservation projects in the UKOTs. It has never done this because the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) directed it to prioritise accessibility for UK residents when making grants. DCMS stated that “there is no bar on Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) making such grants [for work in the UKOTs] but HLF’s current policy is to treat any such applications as a low priority”.<sup>161</sup> UKOTs residents are currently unable to play the National Lottery.

66. Our predecessor’s 2014 Report on Sustainability in the Overseas Territories recommended that DCMS extended “the right to play the National Lottery to UKOTs residents using terminals and via the internet” and gave equal priority to applications from projects in the UKOTs.<sup>162</sup> The Government has made no progress on this recommendation. The Government argued that “any direction that attempted to give OTs equal priority to funding as those which benefit UK citizens would not in itself guarantee funding for OT projects” as “the number of applications for funding received by Lottery distributors far outweighs the amount of funding available”.<sup>163</sup> However, giving these applications equal priority would improve the chances of projects in the UKOTs receiving funding. Chagos Conservation Trust told us that it:

Would be an easy and cheap way for the government to demonstrate that the UKOTs were indeed part of the UK’s family and to assist the UKOTs in preserving their biodiversity as well as other matters of priority to the Heritage Lottery Fund.<sup>164</sup>

The Government told us that there were a number of obstacles including “significant challenges in installing and running lottery terminals in such distant and disparate areas”.<sup>165</sup>

**67. A lack of funding in the UKOTs hampers the ability to effectively manage and enforce designated MPAs. We welcome the Government’s commitment of £20 million over the next four years to support the implementation, management, surveillance, monitoring and enforcement of MPAs in the UKOTs. However, we are concerned about the loss of EU BEST funding which currently provides approximately 1/3 of all environmental project funding in the UKOTs.**

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160 Q 130; Zoological Society of London ([MPA0032](#)), 31

161 The Department for Culture, [Media and Sport and the United Kingdom’s Overseas Territories](#), DCMS, March 2012

162 Environmental Audit Committee, Tenth Report of Session 2013–14, [Sustainability in the UK Overseas Territories](#), HC 332, 42

163 Environmental Audit Committee, [Eighth Special Report of Session 2013–14, Sustainability in the UK Overseas Territories: Government Response to the Committee’s Tenth Report of Session 2013–14](#), HC 1167, 13

164 Chagos Conservation Trust ([MPA0026](#)), 34

165 Environmental Audit Committee, [Eighth Special Report of Session 2013–14, Sustainability in the UK Overseas Territories: Government Response to the Committee’s Tenth Report of Session 2013–14](#), HC 1167, 13

68. *We recommend that the Government commits to replacing BEST funding after we leave the European Union. The UK Government should explore and promote opportunities for the UKOTs to access funding sources from environmental initiatives, NGOs, conservation groups and charities for environmental projects in the UKOTs. This should be used as an additional source of funding for projects in the UKOTs and not be utilised as an excuse to replace any existing sources of funding. This would help the Government contribute to achieving the Global Goal 14 ‘Life Below Water’.*

## Gibraltar

69. The EU referendum has particular implications for MPAs in Gibraltar. Gibraltar will leave the EU with the United Kingdom. However, the Southern Waters of Gibraltar’s Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas (designated under EU Directives) are also designated as a protected area by Spain. The EU accepts both the Spanish and UK/Gibraltar designations. This means that the Spanish Government is also obliged to ensure activities in these waters comply with the Habitats Directive and are required “to perform enforcement, surveillance, monitoring and inspection functions in BGTW for that purpose”.<sup>166</sup> HMG of Gibraltar expressed concern that:

With the UK leaving the EU, and not participating in the Working Groups and Committees that designate such sites, Spain will be able to act with impunity in such matters within the EU. It will no doubt take advantage of the EU to seek to assert jurisdiction in BGTW and more specifically within Gibraltar’s [MPA] network.<sup>167</sup>

70. *The UK Government must assess the likely impact of leaving the EU on Gibraltar’s Marine Protected Areas. In response to this report, it must set out what additional support it intends to provide to Government of Gibraltar to prevent incursions in their territorial waters. It must set out in the Great Repeal Bill and any new Fisheries or Environmental Protection Act how the funding, monitoring and evaluation of Gibraltar’s MPAs will proceed to minimise any future difficulties with Spain over management measures.*

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<sup>166</sup> HM Government of Gibraltar ([MPA0022](#))

<sup>167</sup> *Ibid*

# Conclusions and recommendations

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## Designation

1. It is essential that the UK has a well-coordinated and ecologically coherent network of Marine Protected Areas. The Government aims for the third tranche of MCZ to help complete its “contribution to the Ecologically Coherent Network in the North East Atlantic”. To fulfil this ambition, the Government must put forward an ambitious third tranche of MCZs and improve cross-border collaboration. However, the current evidence threshold for MCZ designation set by Defra is unreasonably high. Despite having one of the best marine evidence bases in the world, evidence for some features in recommended MCZs cannot reach the standards set by Defra. Defra have exacerbated this problem due to their unwillingness to provide adequate investment for the gathering of further evidence. (Paragraph 16)
2. As it stands, the network fails to adequately protect mobile species, sand, and mud habitats. Although we welcome the Department’s recent call for third party proposals on Tranche 3 zones for mobile species, we believe that the six-week timeframe and high evidence threshold placed unrealistic expectations on respondents, limiting the quality and number of submissions received (Paragraph 17)
3. *The Government should not make perfection the enemy of the good by using a lack of ‘perfect data’ as an excuse to delay the designation of sites. The Government must adopt a precautionary principle approach to Tranche 3 site selection and designations should be made using ‘best available’ data. In selecting the third tranche of MCZs, Defra Ministers must take note of the statutory nature conservation bodies’ ‘gap analysis’ and ensure it fills all the gaps identified. This must include designation of sites to protect both sand and mud habitats and sites for mobile species. The third tranche must be considerably more ambitious and larger than the two previous tranches, bringing the total number of MCZs much closer to the 127 zones originally recommended. Given the time that has elapsed since the 127 zones were identified, we are concerned by the delay in designating all the sites that will be required to achieve an Ecologically Coherent Network. The Government has indicated that the timescale for the third tranche may slip even further. We think this is unacceptable, and call on the Government to bring forward proposals as soon as possible (Paragraph 18)*

## Management Measures

4. *Whilst designating MPAs is important, their benefits will only be realised if they are effectively managed. Once a site is designated as an MPA, the MMO and the IFCAs should make this the primary consideration in management and decision-making. It is essential that the Government put in place strong monitoring and surveillance regimes to deter illegal activity. The Government must establish a fully integrated monitoring and surveillance regime. To achieve this, the management organisations should approve an inshore vessel monitoring system suitable for tracking smaller vessels. The Government should also consider investing in aerial and seaborne drones. The Government should integrate intelligence from inshore VMS into the current VMS hub, so that all information can be viewed centrally. (Paragraph 22)*

5. We are very concerned that funding cuts to the MMO and the IFCAs will place great strain on their ability effectively to manage and enforce the MPA network. The designation of the largest and most complex tranche of MCZs in 2018/19 will put further pressure on them. (Paragraph 27)
6. *In response to this report, the Government should provide its assessment of any additional budget and resources that will be provided to the MMO and the IFCAs to enable them effectively to manage the third tranche of MCZs and designated MPAs. The Government should look at using revenues raised by the aggregates levy to fund marine protection. If the Government is not prepared to provide extra resources, it should set out what consultation it has had with these bodies and provide evidence which shows that the considerable additional responsibilities can be met within existing budgets. The Government should also ensure all IFCAs receive the full funding they are entitled to and that the MMO's budget is not cut further. The Government should commit to make up any loss of EU funding to the MMO as a result of Britain's exit from the European Union.* (Paragraph 28)
7. We are shocked and disappointed by the Government's decision to exclude reference areas from the third tranche of MCZs. Despite commissioning a study from the CEFAS on 'Highly Protected Marine Areas', it appears that the Government has already made up its mind not to include reference areas within the MPA network. The Government seem content to compare sites which are degraded to different degrees, failing to understand what the ecosystem can regenerate towards. Without reference areas the Government will be unable to establish an effective and coherent MPA network, as they will have no benchmark against which to assess the effectiveness of management measures. Whilst we recognise the initial concerns of various industry representatives, we believe that these could be alleviated with proper consultation and selection of a smaller number of carefully chosen sites. (Paragraph 35)
8. *The Government should recognise that reference areas are an essential component of any ecologically coherent and well-managed network of MPAs. Therefore, to complete the network, the Government must commit to establishing reference areas within MPAs in each biogeographic region, using best available evidence assessed against the Ecological Network Guidance criteria. The Government must consult those likely to have an interest in the sites selected.* (Paragraph 36)
9. *Reference areas provide the Government with a means to assess how well the MPA network is performing and help them to understand the potential for recovery in the absence of human activities. This data should then be utilised to provide management targets for other sites. Given the problems with the current MPA communications strategy, reference areas must be utilised to showcase the potential benefits of MPAs. We believe that these areas should be called 'recovery areas' rather than 'reference areas' to more accurately reflect the conservation objectives of these sites.* (Paragraph 37)
10. *The Government must publish the outcomes of the CEFAS study and, if it chooses not to proceed with reference areas, it must outline what other forms of data will be used to assess progress against conservation objectives.* (Paragraph 38)
11. *The Government should ensure that all European Marine Sites are transferred into English law via the Great Repeal Bill and that reporting, monitoring, evaluation and*

*enforcement structures are preserved and set out in a new Environmental Protection Act, or Fisheries Act. To contribute to the health of the marine environment as a whole, the Government must continue to designate sites to protect habitats and species of both European and national importance. Designation does not guarantee protection so the Government should ensure that this is carried out in such a way that retains or improves upon the level of environmental protection and enforcement currently provided in the EU. The Government must work with other member states to ensure that management recommendations are in place for all designated MPAs before the UK leaves the EU. It must ensure that the process of exiting the EU does not create paralysis in establishing effective management measures in MPAs beyond 6 nautical miles. If the Government withdraws from the Common Fisheries Policy, it should recognise that there are likely to be significant changes to the management of offshore MPAs. In light of this, it should undertake a review of current management arrangements, with a view to creating a less complex management system. (Paragraph 47)*

### Communication

12. MPAs should be the jewels in Britain's crown and seen as national parks of the sea. Raising awareness of MPAs amongst the general public should be an important part of the programme's implementation both in the UK and in the Overseas Territories. The Government needs to do a better job of promoting the benefits of marine protection. Despite this Committee having identified this as a concern in 2014, the Government's communications strategy is still unsatisfactory. Information is both fragmented and overly technical and the Government has made little progress in using innovative methods to communicate the benefits of MPAs. An improved communications strategy is vital given that the third tranche of MCZs is likely to contain some of the most controversial sites. (Paragraph 51)
13. *To gain support from stakeholders, the Government needs to implement a robust communications strategy that aims to raise awareness of the MPA network amongst businesses and the general public. This improved communications strategy should be implemented alongside consultations for the third tranche of MCZs. The Government must develop a consolidated central source of MPA information and be more creative in the ways that it communicates information about the network. The Government should ensure that its plans for marine protection are fully set out in its forthcoming 25 year plan for the environment. The IFCAs and the MMO should work together with Natural England to provide information about MPAs along the entire length of the Coastal Path. The Government must ensure it consults with stakeholders at a local level to secure widespread support for designations. (Paragraph 52)*

### Overseas Territories

14. *To gain support for the MPA network, the Government must ensure that it consults more effectively and transparently with Governments and local communities in the Overseas Territories. It should ensure that any concerns of the UKOTs are given due consideration before designating MPAs in their waters. (Paragraph 56)*

15. Designation of an MPA is only the first step. MPAs will only be effective if they are properly resourced, managed, monitored and enforced. Many UKOTs lack the necessary resources to effectively manage their MPAs. (Paragraph 60)
16. *The Government must provide support to the UKOTs to help them properly detect and deter illegal activities. The Government must explore ways of strengthening surveillance and monitoring, to help detect illegal fishing activities in resource-poor UKOTs.* (Paragraph 61)
17. A lack of funding in the UKOTs hampers the ability to effectively manage and enforce designated MPAs. We welcome the Government's commitment of £20 million over the next four years to support the implementation, management, surveillance, monitoring and enforcement of MPAs in the UKOTs. However, we are concerned about the loss of EU BEST funding which currently provides approximately 1/3 of all environmental project funding in the UKOTs. (Paragraph 67)
18. *We recommend that the Government commits to replacing BEST funding after we leave the European Union. The UK Government should explore and promote opportunities for the UKOTs to access funding sources from environmental initiatives, NGOs, conservation groups and charities for environmental projects in the UKOTs. This should be used as an additional source of funding for projects in the UKOTs and not be utilised as an excuse to replace any existing sources of funding. This would help the Government contribute to achieving the Global Goal 14 'Life Below Water'.* (Paragraph 68)
19. *The UK Government must assess the likely impact of leaving the EU on Gibraltar's Marine Protected Areas. In response to this report, it must set out what additional support it intends to provide to Government of Gibraltar to prevent incursions in their territorial waters. It must set out in the Great Repeal Bill and any new Fisheries or Environmental Protection Act how the funding, monitoring and evaluation of Gibraltar's MPAs will proceed to minimise any future difficulties with Spain over management measures.* (Paragraph 70)

# Abbreviations

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**CBD** - Convention on Biological Diversity

**CEFAS** - Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science

**Defra** - Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs

**FCO** - Foreign and Commonwealth Office

**IFCAs** - Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities

**JNCC** - Joint Nature Conservation Committee

**MCZ** - Marine Conservation Zones

**MMO** - Marine Management Organisation

**MPAs** - Marine Protected Areas

**NE** - Natural England

**OSPAR** - Oslo/Paris convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic

**UKOTs** - UK Overseas Territories

**VMS** - Vessel Monitoring System

## Glossary

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**Aichi Targets:** 20 Targets agreed by all 193 Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity.

**Aichi Target 11:** asks that by 2020, at least 10% of coastal and marine areas are to be conserved through well managed, ecologically representative and well connected systems of protected areas.

**Highly Protected Marine Areas:** Marine Protected Areas where no disturbing or damaging activities are allowed to take place.

**Marine Conservation Zones:** a type of Marine Protected Area that protects a range of nationally important, rare or threatened habitats and species.

**Marine Protected Areas:** an umbrella term to describe a wide range of protected areas for marine conservation around the world.

**Marine Strategy Framework Directive:** An EU directive which requires Member States to achieve Good Environmental Status of the Seas by 2020.

**OSPAR:** an international agreement to achieve a coherent and well managed network of protected areas by 2016.

**Ramsar sites:** wetlands of international importance designated under the Ramsar Convention.

**Sites of Special Scientific Interest:** sites designed to protect the best examples of the UK's plants, animals or geological features.

**Special Areas of Conservation:** European sites designated to conserve the 189 habitat types and 788 species identified under the Habitats Directive.

**Special Protection Areas:** European sites classified under the Birds Directive. They are classified for rare and vulnerable birds and for regularly occurring migratory species.

# Formal Minutes

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**Tuesday 21 March 2017**

Members present.

Mary Creagh, in the Chair:

Peter Aldous	John Mc Nally
Caroline Lucas	Joan Ryan
Scott Mann	Dr Matthew Offord
Kerry McCarthy	

Draft Report (*Marine Protected Areas Revisited*), proposed by the Chair, brought up and read.

Paragraphs 1 to 70 read and agreed to.

Summary agreed to.

List of abbreviations agreed to

Glossary agreed to

*Resolved*, That the Report be the Tenth Report of the Committee to the House.

*Ordered*, That the Chair make the Report to the House.

*Ordered*, That embargoed copies of the Report be made available, in accordance with the provisions of Standing Order No. 134.

*[The Committee adjourned*

## Witnesses

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The following witnesses gave evidence. Transcripts can be viewed on the [inquiry publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

### Tuesday 13 December 2017

*Question number*

**Joan Edwards**, Head of Living Seas, The Wildlife Trusts, **Dr Jean-Luc Solandt**, Principal Specialist, marine protected areas, Marine Conservation Society, and **Jeff Knott**, Head of Nature Policy, RSPB [Q1–36](#)

**Professor Callum Roberts**, University of York, **Peter Jones**, Reader in Environmental Governance, University College London, **Professor Russell Wynn**, National Oceanography Centre, and **Dr Matthew Frost**, Deputy Director, Knowledge Exchange, Marine Biological Association [Q37–60](#)

### Tuesday 10 January 2017

**Rodney Anderson**, Advisor, North Sea Marine Cluster; **Peter Barham**, Chair, Seabed User & Development Group, **Dale Rodmell**, Assistant Chief Executive, National Federation of Fishermen's Organisations, and **Emma Barton**, Planning and Environmental Manager, the Royal Yachting Association [Q61–102](#)

**Catherine Wensink**, Forum Manager and Senior Conservation Officer, UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum, **Charles Clover**, Executive Director, Blue Marine Foundation and **Thomas Hickey**, Officer, Government Relations, Pew Charitable Trusts [Q103–141](#)

### Tuesday 31 January 2017

**John Tuckett**, Chief Executive Officer, Marine Management Organisation, **Dr Stephen Bolt**, Chief Executive Officer, Association of Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities, and **Dr Jon Davies**, MPA Programme Leader, Joint Nature Conservation Committee [142–197](#)

**Dr Thérèse Coffey**, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Environment and Rural Life Opportunities, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, the **Rt Hon Baroness Anelay of St Johns**, Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, **Dr Gemma Harper**, Deputy Director for Marine and Chief Social Scientist, Defra, and **Jane Rumble**, Head of Polar Regions, FCO [Q198–253](#)

## Published written evidence

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The following written evidence was received and can be viewed on the [inquiry publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

MPA numbers are generated by the evidence processing system and so may not be complete.

- 1 (1) Chagos Refugees Group & (2) UK Chagos Support Association ([MPA0001](#))
- 2 Association of IFCA's ([MPA0041](#))
- 3 Association of Inshore Fisheries and Conservatoin Authorities ([MPA0006](#))
- 4 Blue Marine Foundation ([MPA0030](#))
- 5 Bournemouth University ([MPA0020](#))
- 6 British Antarctic Survey, Natural Environment Research Council ([MPA0011](#))
- 7 British Association for Shooting and Conservation ([MPA0028](#))
- 8 British Marine Aggregate Producers Association ([MPA0021](#))
- 9 Chagos Conservation Trust ([MPA0026](#))
- 10 Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (Cifa) ([MPA0013](#))
- 11 Chartered Institute of Ecology & Environmental Management ([MPA0014](#))
- 12 DEFRA ([MPA0038](#))
- 13 Dr Jon Copley ([MPA0007](#))
- 14 Dr Keith Hiscock ([MPA0010](#))
- 15 Falklands Conservation ([MPA0036](#))
- 16 Government of South Georgia & the South Sandwich Islands ([MPA0018](#))
- 17 Greenpeace UK ([MPA0027](#))
- 18 HM Government of Gibraltar ([MPA0022](#))
- 19 Marine Conservation Society ([MPA0035](#))
- 20 Marinet Limited ([MPA0008](#))
- 21 Mr Peter Mason ([MPA0031](#))
- 22 Mrs Deborah Hoskin ([MPA0017](#))
- 23 National Federation of Fishermen's Organisations ([MPA0019](#))
- 24 North Sea Marine Cluster ([MPA0016](#))
- 25 Oil & Gas UK ([MPA0034](#))
- 26 Royal Yachting Association ([MPA0033](#))
- 27 RSPB ([MPA0025](#))
- 28 Terri Portmann ([MPA0039](#))
- 29 The Pew Trusts ([MPA0009](#))
- 30 The Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust ([MPA0024](#))
- 31 The Wildlife Trusts ([MPA0029](#))
- 32 Thomas Hooper ([MPA0012](#))
- 33 UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum ([MPA0005](#))

- 34 UKOTCF ([MPA0040](#))
- 35 Wildlife and Countryside Link ([MPA0023](#))
- 36 WWF-UK ([MPA0015](#))
- 37 Yarmouth Isle of wight ([MPA0037](#))
- 38 Zoological Society of London ([MPA0032](#))

# List of Reports from the Committee during the current Parliament

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All publications from the Committee are available on the [publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

The reference number of the Government's response to each Report is printed in brackets after the HC printing number.

## Session 2016–17

First Report	Soil health	HC 180 (HC 650)
Second Report	Flooding: Cooperation across Government	HC 183 (HC 645)
Third Report	Environmental impact of microplastics	HC 179 (HC 802)
Fourth Report	Sustainability in the Department for Transport	HC 184 (HC 819)
Fifth Report	Sustainability and the HM Treasury	HC 181
Sixth Report	The Future of the Natural Environment after the EU Referendum	HC 599
Seventh Report	The Airports Commission Report Follow up: Carbon Emissions, Air Quality and Noise	HC 840
Eighth Report	Sustainability and HM Treasury: Government's Response to the Committee's Fifth Report	HC 1049
Ninth Report	The Sustainable development goals in the UK	HC 596
First Special Report	EU and UK Environmental Policy: Government Response to the Committee's Third Report of Session 2015–16	HC 644
Second Special Report	Flooding: Cooperation across Government: Government Response to the Committee's Second Report of Session 2016–17	HC 645
Third Special Report	Soil Health: Government Response to the Committee's First Report of Session 2016–17	HC 650
Fourth Special Report	Sustainability in the Department for Transport: Government Response to the Committee's Third Report of Session 2016–17	HC 819
Fifth Special Report	Environmental impact of microplastics: Government Response to the Committee's Fourth Report of Session 2016–17	HC 802

**Session 2015–16**

First Report	The Airports Commission Report: Carbon Emissions, Air Quality and Noise	HC 389
Second Report	The Future of the Green Investment Bank	HC 536
Third Report	EU and UK Environmental Policy	HC 537
First Special Report	Local Nature Partnerships: Government Response to the Committee's Twelfth Report of Session 2014–15	HC 377
Second Special Report	Climate change adaptation: Government Response to the Committee's Tenth Report of Session 2014–15	HC 590