



**Advice on conservation objectives and activities occurring
within English Marine Protected Areas**

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What this talk covers



1. To explain what MPA Conservation Advice is and why we provide it
2. To present Natural England's work to provide new advice that is:
 - a. up-to-date
 - b. easily accessible
 - c. allows applicants to assess the impact of their proposed development against the conservation objectives for a site...to support UK government's objective of establishing a well managed MPA network
3. To communicate what we have done and will be doing in the future

The purpose of Conservation Advice



1. Provides conservation objectives and defines them in more detail to describe the condition we want protected sites to achieve (i.e. defines NE's advice on 'favourable condition')
2. Provides a framework for assessing development under Article 6.2 / 6.3 (e.g. determining Likely Significant Effect, Appropriate Assessments for Habitat Regulation Assessments/MCZ assessments)
3. Informs our advice on the need for pro-active management measures (e.g. fisheries/ recreational management)
4. Identifies where there are evidence gaps and informs our monitoring programme

Why do we provide MPA Conservation Advice?



Natural England has a statutory responsibility to produce Conservation Advice for MPAs in English Territorial Waters (0 – 12nm):

1. Habitats Regulations Advice for SPAs & SAC/SCIs (regulation 35) :
 - a. Conservation objectives (COs)
 - b. provide Advice on Operations (AoO) that may cause deterioration to the habitats or disturb the species

2. Ramsar Convention – UK government policy to treat same as Natura 2000 sites

3. Marine & Coastal Access Act (Section 127) – we must provide advice for Marine Conservation Zones when asked

Project objectives - to improve our case work & management advice



1. Speed up tests of Likely Significant Effect - understanding potential impacts of activities on qualifying features
2. Help inform Appropriate Assessment by providing templates of what needs to be assessed through the provision of Conservation Objectives Feature Frameworks
3. Sensitivity of features – consistency in advice to a much higher level of detail
4. Single system that presents evidence

Project objectives - to improve our evidence & monitoring programme



1. Identifying confidence in our evidence and where gaps exist:
 - Mapping data
 - Sensitivity assessments
 - Ecological understanding and descriptions of features
2. Informing our monitoring planning – what needs to be monitored to determine condition of qualifying features (Article 17 and Article 12 for SPAs) and Good Environmental Status of habitats for MSFD



How are we improving it – the specifics



1. Conservation Objectives & Supplementary Advice define what condition we want protected sites to achieve (i.e. defines NE's advice on 'favourable condition')
 - a. Where evidence is available, we will quantify objectives for:
 - i. Presence, Extent, Structure and function and supporting processes
 - ii. Describing integrity – separating objectives from monitoring targets

How are we improving it – the specifics



2. It will communicate our understanding of current condition of the protected features and contribution to Favourable Conservation Status
3. It identifies the activities that cause pressures that features are sensitive to
4. It identifies the evidence that we have, our confidence in it, and where there are gaps
5. Developing an interactive web-based system to disseminate advice

Challenge: more complex information to be presented in a format that is clear, easily understood and satisfies the needs of the stakeholders (internal and external) that use it

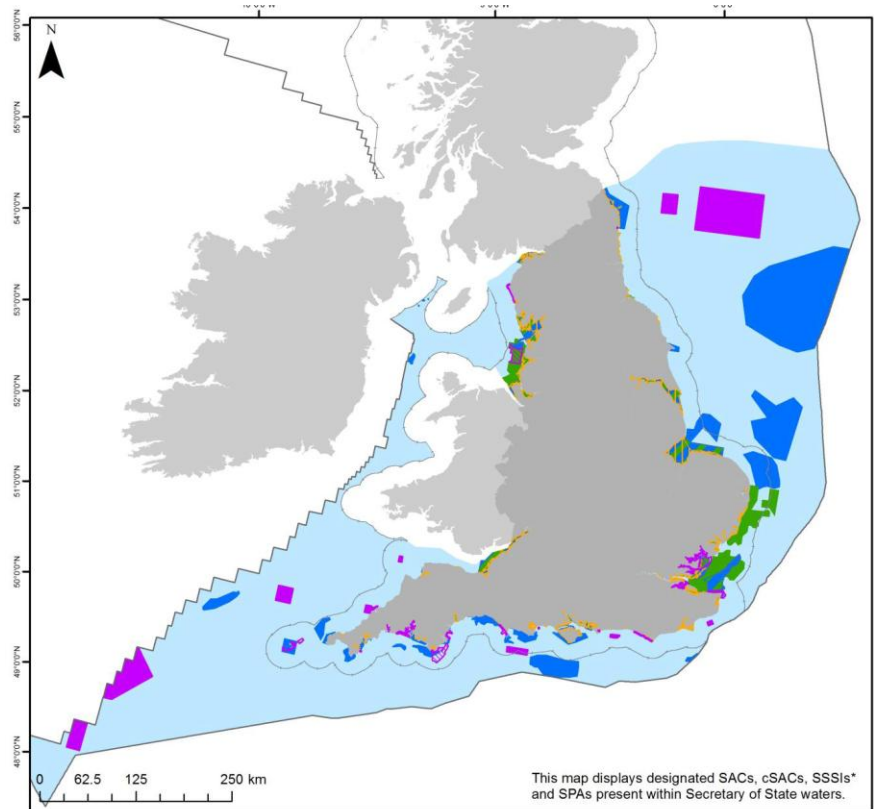
Our programme of work



New and updated conservation advice for all MPAs in English territorial waters by March 2018 (0 – 12nm):

>150 sites:

- Special Areas of Conservation
- Special Protection Areas
- Ramsar sites
- Marine Conservation Zones



[Existing MPAs in English waters and the offshore waters adjacent to Wales and Northern Ireland](#)

Current timetable of advice production



- Formal statutory advice on 31 March 2015:
 - 3 SPA & 3 overlapping Ramsars in Liverpool City Region
 - Kingmere MCZ
- Draft advice for 10 SPAs/Ramsars: 31 March 2015
- Draft advice for 7 SAC/MCZs: June 2015
- On-going programme of advice production to March 2018 – prioritised to meet requirements in high-risk sites
- In some cases we will prioritise production of advice for a limited number of features in a site to satisfy requirements to put management in place by December 2016

The structure and presentation of our new advice



1. [‘How to use MPA Conservation Advice’](#) gov.uk page that includes/links to:
 - a. assessment process flowcharts

2. [Site specific pages:](#)
 - a. Site information (web page)
 - i. Legal provisions
 - ii. Site overview
 - iii. High-level Conservation Objectives

 - b. Supplementary Advice (PDF)
 - i. Feature descriptions
 - ii. Seasonality tables – when are protected species present?
 - iii. Supplementary Advice Tables

What are we providing from March 2015?



- c. Interactive maps of features/supporting habitats – ‘MAGIC’ web-system
 - d. Advice on Operations (PDF)
3. Supporting documents
- a. [Conservation advice for Marine Protected Areas: project background](#)
 - b. [Conservation advice for Marine Protected Areas: pressure benchmarks](#)
 - c. [SAC features and SPA supporting habitats: general descriptions](#)

What is not included in the terrestrial or marine conservation advice - FCTs



- Monitoring plans (previously presented as Favourable Condition Tables (FCTs)) are excluded
- FCTs set out what we want to monitor to assess the condition of features and whether conservation objectives are being achieved
- It is expected that a limited number of attributes for each feature will be monitored to assess condition – not all attributes
- Evidence teams are leading the development of new monitoring plans to enable us to fulfil our statutory obligations (e.g. Article 12, 17 and MSFD reporting)

Questions?

