



MARINE CONSERVATION ZONES IN THE SOUTH-WEST INFORMATION FOR WILDLIFE ENTHUSIASTS



Finding Sanctuary is the most important opportunity for marine protection there has ever been in the south-west of England. Using an unprecedented level of public participation and the best science available, the project will work with sea users and interest groups to plan Marine Conservation Zones for a healthy, sustainable marine environment in the south-west.

FINDING SANCTUARY

Finding Sanctuary is a partnership project working with people who use the sea for their livelihood or leisure to identify Marine Conservation Zones (MCZs) around south-west England. The goal of MCZs will be to safeguard and encourage recovery of wildlife and habitat, and to help ensure the long-term sustainability of marine resources in the region. Finding Sanctuary is the first of four projects of its kind around the English coast, working with sea users and interest groups to develop recommendations for Marine Conservation Zones.

Finding Sanctuary Project Area:



The Finding Sanctuary study region extends over 93,000km² of sea and includes 1,500km of coastline.

From the project outset we have brought together representatives from a wide cross-section of marine sea users and interest groups including scientists, leisure groups, conservationists and fishermen. These representatives sit on the Finding Sanctuary Steering Group. The Steering Group will work together to explore where MCZs could be located around the south-west, and will make their recommendations to Government in 2011.

WILDLIFE ENTHUSIASTS AND MARINE CONSERVATION ZONES

With some of the most interesting marine and bird life around the country, the south-west is a popular location for wildlife watching and rockpooling. With detailed knowledge of local sites and species, wildlife enthusiasts will play an important role in developing ideas for Marine Conservation Zones, ensuring they protect key habitats and species. We hope that wildlife enthusiasts will get involved in the planning of sites and that they will support and champion them.

In order to meet the targets they are given, the Steering Group may decide that some sites should be highly protected (also known as no take-zones). However, by engaging with Finding Sanctuary local sea users will help to ensure that all such sites are planned in a way that causes least impact to their activity. We hope that by involving sea users from the earliest planning stages we will build understanding and support for the MCZ recommendations put forward by the Finding Sanctuary Steering Group.

MARINE CONSERVATION ZONES

Marine Conservation Zones (MCZs) are a new type of Marine Protected Area (MPA) being introduced through the UK Marine and Coastal Access Act. MCZs will protect nationally important marine wildlife, habitats, geology and geomorphology. Sites will be selected both inshore and offshore, up to mean high water to protect the full range of marine wildlife.

MCZs together with other types of MPA, will make up an ecologically coherent network of Marine Protected Areas. This means the MPA network will be a collection of areas that work together to provide more benefits than an individual area could on its own. MCZs will have a range of protection levels that reflect the level to which a particular habitat or wider ecosystem needs to be safeguarded. The Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities together with the Marine Management Organisation and the Royal Navy will be responsible for ensuring that MCZs are enforced.



PAUL NAYLOR

WHICH AREAS IN THE SOUTH-WEST WILL BE PROTECTED?

We don't yet know which areas will be protected or what degree of protection they will receive. The Finding Sanctuary Steering Group, made up of a range of sea users and interest groups, has responsibility for developing recommendations on the location of Marine Conservation Zones (MCZs) in the south-west, and how activities within them should be managed. Over a number of meetings the Steering Group will negotiate and discuss potential options for MCZs always looking to improve efficiency. This will ensure that MCZs are planned in a way that minimises impacts to sea users and maximises the benefits for nature conservation. Local MCZ groups will also provide input to the Steering Group to ensure that local knowledge and feedback is also incorporated.

The wildlife charities who sit on the Steering Group will be representing your interests during negotiations. The Finding Sanctuary Steering Group will make its recommendations for MCZs in the south-west to Government in June 2011. Following a process of public consultation, sites will be designated in 2012.

“THE SUCCESS OF THE PROJECT WILL ULTIMATELY DEPEND ON THE QUALITY OF INFORMATION PROVIDED. WILDLIFE ENTHUSIASTS HAVE A UNIQUE INSIGHT INTO LOCAL MARINE WILDLIFE.”

Wildlife and Countryside Link

HOW ARE WILDLIFE ENTHUSIASTS GETTING INVOLVED?

A growing number of wildlife enthusiasts are getting in touch with us to share their life-learned knowledge of sea areas, their views on MCZs and to tell us which areas are important to them.

Many wildlife enthusiasts have spent years watching from their local cliff-tops or exploring the rocky shore and have in-depth knowledge of these areas and the plants and animals that inhabit them. In order to ensure MCZs are placed in the best locations, we need to draw on this wealth of knowledge. We also need to know which sea areas are most important to you. Your representatives on the Steering Group need to have accurate information about where wildlife watching and rockpooling take place in the region to be able to plan MCZs carefully.

Our liaison officers are meeting with wildlife enthusiasts throughout the region to help them map out their activity and record their valuable knowledge. For the most part this will be done through one-to-one interviews using questionnaires and maps.



WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

We are working together with the RSPB, South West Wildlife Trusts and The National Trust to reach out to wildlife enthusiasts across the south-west.

On our Steering Group we have two people representing your interests:



Richard White
Devon Wildlife Trust representing
Wildlife and Countryside Link



Paul St. Pierre
Conservation Officer
RSPB

These representatives are responsible for ensuring that wildlife enthusiast's interests are taken into account during the planning of MCZs. It is the Finding Sanctuary team's job to provide them with the data they need to make decisions on your behalf and to help you establish links with your Steering Group representatives. Wildlife enthusiasts can also be represented on the local MCZ groups in Cornwall, the Isles of Scilly, Devon, Dorset and Somerset. These groups will provide local input, knowledge and feedback to the Steering Group.

GET INVOLVED

There are two ways to get involved:

1. You can contact your local liaison officer who will be happy to meet with you, explain the project in more detail, listen to your opinions and help you to map the areas you use.
2. You can map the areas you use through our online mapping tool. This interactive tool allows you to see the many different types of data we are collecting, and make your own additions to the maps. Visit our interactive map.

www.mczmapping.org

"In the face of the historical degradation of our marine ecosystems it is essential that Finding Sanctuary delivers an ecologically coherent network of Marine Protected Areas. They must take into account the known ecological requirements of all marine life, including seabirds, providing protection for the most important sites and recovery elsewhere. The success of the project will ultimately depend on the quality of information about our marine wildlife available to guide the identification of potential marine sites. Wildlife enthusiasts have a unique insight into local marine wildlife, often gathered through years of patient and careful observation."

Wildlife and Countryside Link



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Project Partnership

