BalancedSeas

Delivering Marine Conservation Zones in the South-East

Balanced Seas
Marine Conservation Zone Project

Final Recommendations

September 7th 2011

Version Control

Version	Name	Issue Date	Amendments
2.0	Final Recommendations	07.09.11	Process sections written ENG targets recalculated Headline statement produced by RSG Final RSG comments included Final SADs written for all rMCZs and rRAs
1.0	Draft Final Recommendations	09.06.11	

Acronyms

AAEI	Additional Areas of Ecological Importance
BAI	Broad Area of Interest
BMAPA	British Marine Aggregates Producers Association
CEFAS	Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Acquaculture Science
CHOPI	Chichester Harbour Oyster Partnership Initiative
CO	Conservation Objective
CRPMEM	Committee Regional des Peches Maritimes et des Elevages Marins
DEFRA	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
EA	Environment Agency
EMS	European Marine Site
ENG	Ecological Network Guidance
EUNIS	European Nature Information System
FOCI	Feature of Conservation Importance
GCR	Geological Conservation Review
GIS	Geographical Information System
IFCA	Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority
LG	Local Group
JNCC	Joint Nature Conservancy Committee
MALSF	Marine Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund
MarLIN	Marine Life Information Network
MCZ	Marine Conservation Zone (dMCZ- draft MCZ)
MESH	Mapping European Seabeds Habitat project
MMO	Marine Management Organisation
MPA	Marine Protected Area
NCSs	Named Consultative Stakeholders
NFFO	National Federation Fishermen's Organisation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PBA	Professional Boatman's Association
REC	Regional Environmental Characterisation
r MCZ	Recommended Marine Conservation Zone
r RA	Recommended Reference Area
RSG	Regional Stakeholder Group
RSPB	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
RYA	Royal Yachting Association
SAC	Special Area of Conservation (d-SAC – draft SAC;p-SAC – proposed SAC)
SAP	Science Advisory Panel
SEEBF	South East England Biodiversity Forum
SDNPA / SDN	South Downs National Park Authority / South Downs Network
SFC	Sea Fisheries Committee
SPA	Special Protection Area
SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest
SNCB	Statutory Nature Conservation Bodies
SWFPO	South Western Fish Producer's Association
VA	Vulnerability Assessment
VMS	Vessel Monitoring System

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Appendices - submitted as separate documents

Headline statement from the Balanced Seas Regional Stakeholder Group

Following the completion of the Balanced Seas process and the submission of the final MCZ recommendations, members of the Regional Stakeholder Group believe the following points need to be taken into account by Defra and the Statutory Nature Conservation Bodies (SNCBs):

1. **The network of recommended MCZs for the Balanced Seas region is the best that could have been developed by the stakeholders involved and the project team supporting them, given the considerable constraints on time, data and timely guidance that have existed throughout the process.**

2. **There is a need to ensure that any SNCB changes to the network, sites, vulnerability assessment, conservation objectives/management measures are be communicated back to stakeholders at both regional and local scales, with an opportunity to comment. This should perhaps also include further testing and sense checking with affected stakeholders in cases of high uncertainty.**
Many of the stakeholder judgements relating to activities and/or sites are based on assumptions and strong caveats, even at the end of the regional project, as a consequence of time constraints. Further clarity over these would provide stakeholders with more confidence, and could significantly reduce many of the standing concerns that exist.

3. **Stakeholder relationships need to be maintained for any resulting MCZ network to realise its potential, particularly the current capacity for dialogue, cohesion, focus and sharing of knowledge.**
Considerable effort, time and resources have been committed by stakeholders throughout the process, and this investment should not be wasted. With the end of the regional projects, there is concern that if this capacity is not maintained, there is considerable risk that relationships will rapidly default back to the sectoral, parochial positioning that the process has worked so hard to overcome. Achieving this capacity for dialogue and cohesion, as far as we have been able, has perhaps been the single greatest achievement of the process. We are mindful of the fact that implementation will be largely reliant on good relations with (and between) communities and stakeholders both specifically with regard to voluntary agreements, but also in oversight and general support.

4. **There needs to be a clear transition process from regional to national, now that the projects are ending, so stakeholders (and equally Defra/SNCBs) fully understand the role they will be expected to fulfil and the realistic opportunities for influence in the future.**
There is recognition that the nature and level of stakeholder involvement will change as the MCZ initiative evolves.

5. **The MCZ process requires specifically tailored engagement at national, regional and local scales to effectively involve marine user stakeholders in future.**
While we recognise that marine planning is an important process, because of the stepped nature of its development (with the planning process not expected to be complete across all English waters until the next decade) it must not be viewed as the answer to future stakeholder engagement for the development and implementation of the MCZ network. The MCZ related needs are very much more immediate.

6. **Resources for co-ordinating and delivering engagement must be urgently and consistently provided to both the IFCAs and the MMO to ensure successful management of designated MCZs.**
There is concern that resources will not be adequate to support needed, on-going stakeholder engagement in the next stages of MCZ development and more importantly, during implementation and future management.

Executive Summary

To fulfil its international obligations, the UK has embarked on a process to establish an ecologically coherent network of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) in UK waters. The network will include existing MPAs[1] and Marine Conservation Zones (MCZs), a new type of site created by the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009. The purpose of MCZs is to protect the full range of nationally important biodiversity, as well as certain rare and threatened species and habitats. The identification of these sites has been done using a stakeholder engagement process through the establishment of four regional MCZ projects.

The process was required to follow Natural England and JNCC's Ecological Network Guidance (ENG) which outlines the specific features and the geographic proportions of habitats that need to be included in the network. Socio-economic factors will be taken into consideration in making the recommendations, provided the criteria and principles in the ENG are met.

The Balanced Seas is the MCZ project responsible for identifying MCZs in southeast England. The Regional Stakeholder Group (RSG), representing all key stakeholder interests, was responsible for making the MCZ recommendations, working through the associated issues, and communicating with the Local Groups. Three geographically based Local Groups played an advisory role, providing information, data and feedback to the RSG as the recommendations were developed. Named Consultative Stakeholders were national or international stakeholders who were unable to attend meetings but wished to input into the development of MCZs by correspondence. The Balanced Seas project team supported the stakeholder group and was responsible for data gathering, compilation, dissemination and presentation of information for the stakeholder groups to make informed decisions.

This report presents the recommendations for MCZs in south-east England, as developed by the Balanced Seas RSG. The recommended MPA network for this region is presented as two alternative network options, since the RSG have put forward two configurations of one particular site (rMCZ 29 or rMCZ 29.2) where there was divided support amongst stakeholder sectors for selecting only one of the sites.

The recommended MPA network (both Options 1 & 2), as identified by the Balanced Seas RSG, comprises:

- 30 recommended MCZs (rMCZs) with draft conservation objectives and potential management measures that have been identified in collaboration with regional, local and public authority stakeholders;
- 25 recommended RAs (rRAs), 24 of which lie within rMCZs and one of which lies within an existing SAC and thus constitutes an additional MCZ on top of the 30 mentioned above; the majority of the RAs have general RSG and Local Group support
- All existing protected areas (SACs, pSACs, SPAs and SSSIs).

The recommended MPA networks (both Option 1 & 2) have been assessed to see how well they follow the ENG principles, as follows:

- **Adequacy targets** have been met for all broad-scale habitats found in the Balanced Seas region, in both Network Option 1 & 2

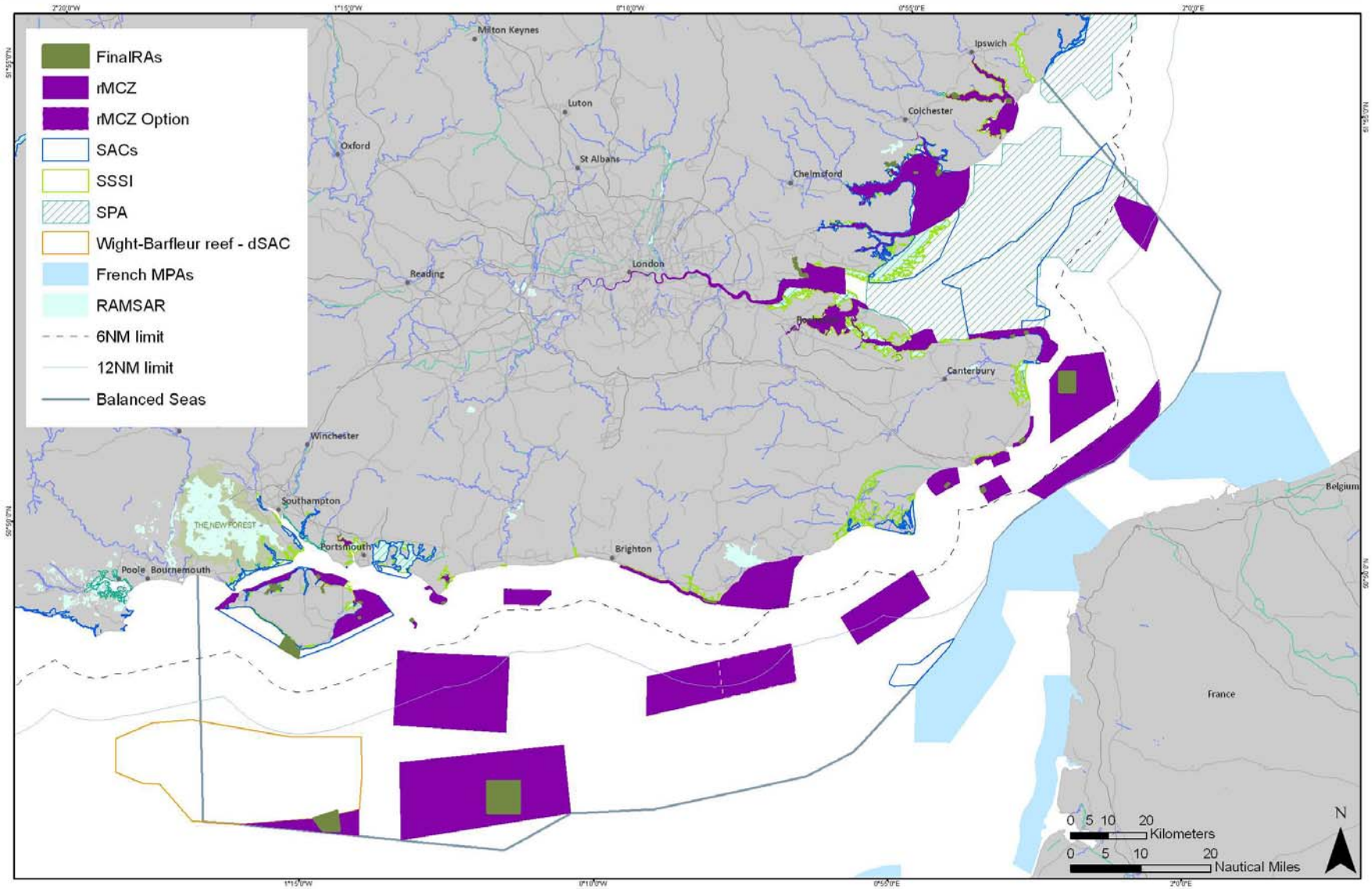
[1] 'Natura 2000' Special Protection Areas and Special Areas of Conservation; Sites of Special Scientific Interest; Ramsar sites

- **Biogeographic representativity** (protection in both the Southern North Sea and the Eastern English Channel Regional Seas) has been met for all broad-scale habitats occurring in the region, in both Network Option 1 & 2
- **Replication targets** have been met for all broad-scale habitats, 16 out of the 17 habitat FOCI and 12 out of the 14 species FOCI occurring in the region, in both Network Option 1 & 2 and where the distribution of the features allowed
- **Viability targets** are considered to be met in all but 2 of the 30 rMCZ sites, where features are not naturally restricted in their distributions
- **Connectivity targets** are met for 4 out of the 5 EUNIS Level 2 habitats, though the outstanding target is considered to be due to artefacts in the habitat mapping process (see main report)
- **Consideration for geological and geomorphological features** has led to 4 of 9 GCR sites and 1 geomorphological feature being included in the network
- **Reference Areas,** providing the highest level of protection within MPAs, have been identified for 42 of the 45 ENG features occurring in the region, 40 of which are considered to be viable in size.

The Balanced Seas network of rMCZs and rRAs has been recommended by the RSG through an iterative process of extended dialogue and consensus-building between and within the RSG and the Local Groups, over a process involving 47 facilitated meetings. There are inevitably varying levels of support among the sectors for the recommendations. Overall, offshore rMCZs have less support than inshore rMCZs due to greater uncertainty regarding the underlying data, the future designation process and the implications for the major UK and non-UK fisheries that take place in this area. rRAs have less support than rMCZs due to the requirement for greater activity restrictions and the limited choice of sites for rarer features. One particular rRA (St Catherine's Point West) has almost no support from the RSG due to the socio-economic impacts it would incur, but has nevertheless has be put forward by the RSG, with strong caveats, in recognition of the fact that it would be necessary if the ENG targets are strictly adhered to. As emphasised by the RSG, a longer time-scale would have allowed for more resolution of many of the issues surrounding the recommendations.

Recommended Marine Conservation Zones (rMCZs),
Recommended Reference Areas (rRAs) and Existing MPAs

Version 1.0
Scale 1:863,298
Projection UTM Zone



Report Structure

This report presents the Final Recommendations, developed by the Balanced Seas Regional Stakeholder Group (RSG) Marine Conservation Zones (MCZs) in south-east England. The report is divided into three parts:

Section 1 gives an overview of the MCZ process, the region, stakeholder engagement and the context of previous work

Section 2 describes how the recommended Marine Protected Area (MPA) network for the Balanced Seas region meets the Ecological Network Guidance (ENG) targets, through the contribution of existing MPAs and recommended MCZs (rMCZs). Maps, graphs and summary statistics are presented here, as well as key issues and uncertainties at the network level (including sites not put forward in the recommendations)

Section 3 describes the format of the site reports for rMCZs and rRAs and lists the sites that have been recommended. Individual site reports are attached to the report as appendices.

1. Balanced Seas context and process

This section contains the following subsections:

1.1 provides some background for any readers new to the MCZ project objectives.
1.2 provides an overview of the key characteristics of the Balanced Seas project area.
1.3 describes the process used to development the recommendations, the key elements of stakeholder engagement, and gives an overview of the timeline of the project and key events.
1.4 briefly overviews teh methods used to gather information.
1.5 Describes some of the outstanding issues and challenges, including the high-level issues and uncertainties that the stakeholders have faced at the process level.
1.6 Gives the comments that RSG members provided on the network results and the process used at the end of the final meeting in August 2011.

1.1. Introduction to the MCZ project

To fulfil its international obligations, the UK has embarked on a process to establish an ecologically coherent network of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) in UK waters. The network will include existing MPAs[2] and Marine Conservation Zones (MCZs), a new type of site created by the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009. The purpose of MCZs is to protect the full range of nationally important biodiversity, as well as certain rare and threatened species and habitats.

In a partnership between Defra, Natural England and the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC), four Regional MCZ Projects[3] have been created. As recommended in the national Project Delivery Guidance, each project has a Regional Stakeholder Group (RSG) or its equivalent, representing the numerous stakeholder interests throughout English waters, that is responsible for making the MCZ recommendations. The RSGs are required to follow Natural England and JNCC's Ecological Network Guidance (ENG) which outlines the specific features and the geographic proportions of habitats that need to be included in the network. Socio-economic factors were taken into consideration in making the recommendations, provided the criteria and principles in the ENG were met. The information on which the recommendations are based comes from a wide range of sources, including local knowledge. The stakeholder structure and engagement process is outlined in Section 1.3.

These are the final MCZ recommendations submitted to the Government on September 6th 2011. Prior to this date, the RSGs submitted 'Progress Reports' to the Science Advisory Panel (SAP), a group of scientists set up to ensure that the overall network of MPAs is ecologically coherent and adequately responds to the targets set. The First Progress Report was submitted on June 30th 2010. The Second Progress Report was submitted on October 29th 2010. The Third Progress Report was submitted on February 28th 2011. Draft Final Recommendations were submitted to the SAP on June 9th 2011[4], with a request that the rMCZ network would only be subject to minor changes prior to the Final Recommendations, submitted on 7st August 2011.

[2] 'Natura 2000' Special Protection Areas and Special Areas of Conservation; Sites of Special Scientific Interest; Ramsar sites
[3] South West (Finding Sanctuary); South East (Balanced Seas); North West (Irish Sea); North East (Net Gain)
[4] Other Regional Projects submitted their Draft Final Recommendations on 1st June 2011. An extension was granted to the Balanced Seas RSG to take into consideration the additional work necessary following the incorporation of a major new seabed habitat survey. Details are described in the following sections.

1.2. Introduction to the Balanced Seas region

The Balanced Seas project area covers the sea surrounding England's south-east coast, from just north of the Suffolk border (ending at the northern shore of the River Deben) around to the Hampshire/ Dorset border, and out to the median line. With a total of about 18,700 km^2, it has the smallest area of the four regional MCZ projects, but involves some of the busiest and most heavily used UK waters. The Wildlife Trusts review of marine biodiversity of the South-East (Browning 2002)[5] provides a good overview of most of the project area and is the source of information in this short introduction. The more recent MASLF synthesis study for the central and eastern English Channel provides a much ore detailed and comprehensive overview of the major part of the project area (James et al., 2011)[6].

The project area is a predominantly shallow (10-40 m below chart datum) with a gently sloping seabed; the maximum depth reaching 85 m in St Catharine's Trench, south of the Isle of Wight. The shallow nature of these waters results in high productivity although this is constrained by the fairly high turbidity especially in nearshore waters and in the southern North Sea and Dover Strait. Visibility in inshore waters reaches a maximum of about 8 m, but 1-3 m is more typical. As a result of the turbidity, algal biomass in sublittoral waters is relatively low, but there is a high biomass and diversity of animal life, especially suspension feeders.

In the north of the project area, off Essex and north Kent, the seabed is particularly shallow with numerous sand banks stretching long distances offshore. The topography changes in eastern Kent, around Dover where the seabed deepens very quickly offshore, with the 20m contour lying only 1.5 km from the coast. The coast from Folkestone to Selsey Bill has a gently shelving seabed, apart from at the headlands of Dungeness and Beachy Head, where there is deeper water close inshore. The Solent is shallow throughout, typically reaching a maximum dredged depth of 15-20m in the central channel. Off Hurst Spit in the western Solent, strong tidal currents scour the channel to over 50m deep. South of the Isle of Wight, the seabed drops to a gently sloping plain 30-50m deep. In the southernmost parts of the project area, close to the Median Line, the water depth is about 50-60 m.

Tidal range in South East England ranges from some of the highest values in the UK (7.0 m at mean spring tides in the Dover Strait), to some of the lowest (less than 2.0 m at mean spring tides in the western Solent). The strongest currents occur in narrows such as Dover Strait, Hurst Narrows and the Solent harbour mouths, and off headlands such as Beachy Head, Selsey Bill and St Catherine's Point.

The project area overlaps two Regional Seas: the southern part of the Southern North Sea and the Eastern English Channel, which reflect two different water bodies – the warm temperate waters of the Lusitanian biogeographical province in the eastern and central Channel, and the cold temperate Boreal waters in the southern North Sea. The region lies in the mixing zone between these two water bodies which creates a gradient from one end of the region to the other and species from both provinces occur here. Salinity throughout most of the region is slightly less than that of oceanic water, due to the mixing of Atlantic water with low salinity coastal waters. Lower salinity waters are found in the extensive estuaries and estuarine complexes, and these have their own range of associated species.

The vast majority of the sublittoral seabed area of the project area is covered in sediment. The variety of combinations of sediment type, together with the considerable geological diversity of the region's scattered rock outcrops, provide a high level of habitat diversity. Gravels are often found in palaeovalleys (ancient river courses), on elevated areas of seabed, in proximity to rocky outcrops and in

[5] Browning, L. 2002. The Marine Biodiversity of South East England. Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trusts. 48 pp.
[6] James, J.W.C.; Pearce, B.; Coggan, R.A.; Leivers, M.; Clark, R.W.E.; Plim, J.F.; Hill, J.M.; Arnott, S.H.L.; Bateson, L.; De-Burgh, Thomas A.; Baggaley, P.A.. 2011 *The MALSF synthesis study in the central and eastern English Channel.* British Geological Survey, 158pp. (OR/11/001) (Unpublished report)

areas swept by strong bottom currents. Sands tend to accumulate where tidal currents are moderate to strong, forming dynamic waves and ridges. Muds occur where tidal currents are weak, in seabed depressions and in estuarine environments.

The project area is particularly notable for the following:

- The most important region for marine and coastal chalk habitats and ecosystems: 68 % of the UK's coastal chalk exposures; the only site in the UK where chalk appears as "offshore cliffs" (i.e. isolated from shore); the UK's only known subtidal, and some of the best examples of, intertidal chalk caves.
- Vast areas of sandbank, such as Margate and Long Sands, which are already designated as a SAC and the famous Goodwin Sands
- Important and varied reef habitats including of chalk, limestone, sandstone, mudstone and clay
- Major estuarine complexes: Stour and Orwell, Blackwater, Colne, Roach and Crouch; Medway, Swale, Thames and Solent.
- The largest naturally occurring oyster population in England

This diversity and productivity, combined with the particular geography of the south-east, is reflected in the immense economic and social value attached to this comparatively small area in terms of fishing, recreation, shipping and other key industries.

The predominance of sediment habitats means that this is one of the most important regions for the aggregates industry, which has three major extraction areas here: in the Outer Thames Estuary, off the Sussex coast, and around the Isle of Wight. The shallow bathymetry has also attracted the renewable energy industry, which has major wind farm developments in the Outer Thames Estuary (Gunfleet Sands, London Array, Thanet and Kentish Flats), off Sussex (Rampion) and off the Isle of Wight. Strong currents, for example in the Dover Straits and Solent area, have made certain parts of the project area of great interest for the development of tidal stream energy.

The proximity of the project area to the continent dictates other key uses of these waters, including a particularly high concentration of subtidal cables and cable projects, and the highest volume of shipping in the UK, including container vessels, ferries and a wide range of other vessels**:** the English Channel is one of the busiest routes in the world, carrying over 400 ships a day**.** For the same reason, some of the largest UK ports lie in the project area (Harwich/Felixstowe, London, Dover, Southampton) with many other smaller but regionally very important ports.

Fishing in the Balanced Seas project area is primarily an inshore activity dominated by small boats, under 10m in length, with some larger vessels operating in the Eastern English Channel offshore waters. Although small compared with some regions, fishing is nevertheless vitally important to the livelihoods of some communities, and the importance of shellfish (oysters, cockles, scallops) means that it has very high economic value in relation to the quantities harvested. Parts of the coastline have no man made or natural harbour and in these areas boats moor offshore or launch straight from the beach.

The south-east waters of England are also among those most heavily used for recreation. Nearly half a million anglers (shore and boat), and thousands of sailing and yachting clubs and individuals use these areas, with particular concentrations in the sheltered estuaries of Essex, North Kent and the Solent. This recreational use is of immense social importance in the region, but also has a high economic value in relation to the various associated servicing sectors (tackle shops, charter boats, marinas etc).
South East England has one of the highest rates of sea level rise in the UK due to increasing sea level (arising from climate change) and lowering of the land (caused by ongoing tilting of the British landmass as it readjusts from Ice Age conditions) (Browning, 2002). This is resulting in loss of littoral habitats due to erosion, inundation and coastal squeeze (the loss of habitats between rising sea levels and man-

made structures) and means that coastal defence and shoreline management plans are important factors to be taken into account when considering the implementation of rMCZs.

1.3 Balanced Seas process and stakeholder engagement

This section covers:

- **A.** Structure of Balanced Seas stakeholder engagement process
- **B.** Roles and Responsibilities of the stakeholder groups
- **C.** Stakeholder analysis and stakeholder group membership
- **D.** Involvement and engagement of international stakeholders
- **E.** Process used to develop recommendations
- **F.** Methods used to gather stakeholder knowledge and information
- **G.** Issues addressed and challenges at the process level

A. Structure of Balanced Seas stakeholder engagement process

The recommendations were developed through a process involving multi-sector stakeholder groups, with each member representing the interests of their sector. The details of this are laid out in the *Balanced Seas: Stakeholder Engagement* document which was prepared by the project team and facilitation team, and made available to those who expressed an interest in participating in the process. The overall structure of the Balanced Seas project is shown in the following diagram:

There were three major elements, reflecting the requirements of the national Project Delivery Guidance[7]:

Regional Stakeholder Group (RSG) –
The RSG is the decision-making body responsible for developing the final recommendations for rMCZs, in accordance with the project aims and the national Ecological Network Guidance (ENG). The members represented the key sectors with an interest in the Balanced Seas project area. These individuals were representatives from organisations and sectors that could provide a strategic and regional perspective,

[7] Natural England and JNCC, 2010. *Delivering the Marine Protected Area Network: Project Delivery Guidance on the Process to Select Marine Conservation Zones*.

including national bodies as necessary. The intention was to keep the group to a maximum of 20-25 members. In practice, there were 34 regular attendees but these nevertheless developed into a cohesive, practical and effective working group. Membership was limited to one representative from each sector wherever possible, and organisations in the same sector were asked to work together to field one representative on the sector's collective behalf.

Towards the middle of the process, it was decided to form two Task Groups from the RSG members – one to address the offshore sites and one for the inshore sites, since rather different issues arose for each of these. The former was a smaller subgroup of the RSG comprising fisheries representatives, national sector representatives for industries such as shipping, and international fisheries interests. The Inshore Task Group comprised the majority of the RSG.

Local Groups (LGs) – the three LGs (Solent, Isle of Wight and Hampshire; Sussex and South Kent; Suffolk, Essex, Thames and North Kent) acted in an advisory role, reviewing the recommendations of the RSG and providing more detailed local knowledge and information. Their membership mirrored that of the RSG, with representatives of all key sectors. The LGs provided a crucial opportunity for the wider stakeholder community to regularly contribute to the RSG's work. Members were representatives of organizations and sectors with a regional, sub-regional or local perspective. The LGs met at key points in the process, to enable discussion, input and deliberation amongst members in response to the work being developed by the RSG. The LGs were responsible for ensuring that the RSG was aware of any local implications of options, draft recommendations etc, which might not have been apparent at a regional level, offering information to the RSG to assist them in their work and responding to requests for information and/or comment from the RSG and project team.

Participation in LG meetings was slightly more flexible than at the RSG, so that key members of the local community or local sector could attend if a site was particularly relevant to them. By early 2011, many of the general locations had been identified and meetings were then held for clusters of geographically related sites e.g. Isle of Wight Sites. Relevant Local Group and RSG members were invited as well as other key stakeholders who could provide specific local knowledge of the area. Sector representation at the meetings was kept as balanced as possible. These meetings helped to gather further information, allowed more time for discussion on individual sites, assisted the spread of awareness of the project and helped to dispel any rumours or misinformation.

For both RSG and LG members, their individual responsibilities were clearly laid out in the project documentation: they were were expected to be able to:

- represent the interests of their sector/organisation or group
- contribute to the work of the group in meetings and between these when requested
- work in a co-operative spirit, whilst respecting that a diversity of views may exist;
- keep their constituency regularly updated and act as a conduit for information flowing both ways;

Named Consultative Stakeholders (NCSs) - those organizations and sectors that were unable to participate in all four projects, for example through lack of capacity or because their input was only needed occasionally. NCSs were given the opportunity to contribute to the recommendation-making process by correspondence. Any stakeholder could apply for NCS status on the condition they met the requirements of RSG membership, and could show that they represent a sector with an interest in the region that does not already have representation on the RSG.

B. Roles and responsibilities of the stakeholder groups

The working arrangements for the RSG and LGs were laid out in their Terms of Reference (TOR), that were developed by the facilitator and project manager, and reviewed and revised by the individual groups. Members agreed to operate within these, since this was recognised as being an act of respect to other members of the group. Serious breaching of the agreement was considered to be a withdrawal of commitment. The TORs were structured as follows:

Aims and Role: This section laid out roles of the groups including ensuring their sectors were kept informed and involved, the parameters under which the project was being run (e.g. time lines, project boundaries, requirement to adhere to national guidance etc), and requirement to clearly document objections or lack of agreement. Members ware expected to *actively* represent their sectors. This means that each member must endeavour to provide their sector with updates on the work and feed in the views of their sector on issues under consideration by the RSG. Members should give consideration as to how this is best managed for their particular sector.

Membership and Responsibilities: Since it was not possible to have every individual stakeholder on the groups, members were required to endeavour to represent their stakeholder sector as a whole; to have good knowledge of their sector and to be willing to work positively with the other group members and speak actively about the interests of their stakeholder sector.

Operational arrangements: Decisions were made through a process of facilitated negotiation, with the aim of achieving maximum agreement. When insurmountable differences of view arose, they were clarified and recorded (including attribution where necessary). The option of appointing a Chair was provided but none of the groups felt this was necessary, as they had confidence that the facilitator and project team could lead them through the process. On the few occasions when the RSG felt it needed to provide input as a body, certain members took the lead and drafted letters/statements assisted by the facilitator. Since the RSG used consensus based decision-making rather than majority voting a Chair was not needed to provide a casting vote or have a 'final say'. Allowance was made for establishing task-focused sub-groups in order to carry forward the work of the RSG between full meetings**.** Certain group members were eligible for a small honorarium or attendance allowance and/or reimbursement of travel expenses, in cases where they were not affiliated to an organisation that covered their costs, or if they were self-employed. Meetings were to be held according to the demands and development of the work, with particular respect to the nationally determined timetable. It was emphasised that it was the responsibility of each member to check the meeting notes for accuracy and raise any concerns as soon as possible with the project team

Working Together: This section laid out the principles for successful group work such as willingness to develop and maintain a collaborative working spirit whilst recognising that differing views may exist; respecting confidentiality (to encourage free expression in meetings, participants can request that their views are not attributed); agreement to ensure that communication of the groups work was clear, consistent and accurate (e.g. not to talk <u>for</u> the group unless mandated to do so; to notify the Project Team in advance of any intention to communicate with the media; to use existing forms of words or other agreed text where possible etc); each sector to designate a lead person to attend meetings so that continuity of membership is maintained.

Meeting Conduct: the facilitator required participants to abide by an agreed protocol requiring for example: mobile phones to be switched off during meeting time, only one person to speak at a time, punctuality, and awareness of sensitivity and commercial confidentiality of some of the information presented.

C. Stakeholder analysis and stakeholder group membership

Membership of the RSG and the LGs was decided through consensual agreement, involving an initial stakeholder analysis exercise and subsequent discussions and meetings with stakeholders.

Initial stakeholder identification
In late 2008, at the inception of the project, a preliminary analysis was undertaken by Natural England South-east Region to identify stakeholders likely to be involved in the MCZ planning process for the Balanced Seas area. Once the project had started (January 2009) this list of individuals and organisations was used to target invitations to two introductory meetings held in March 2009 in Portsmouth and London, at which the project was explained.

In November 2009, once the project team had been recruited and the work plan developed, five county level meetings were held in Essex, Kent, Sussex, Hampshire and Isle of Wight to introduce the project in more detail, and start discussions with stakeholders as to how they would like to be involved in the process. These facilitated meetings had the following objectives:

- Develop ideas about how to establish the RSG, including selection criteria (see below), the sectors/subsectors to be represented, and the organisations that might be suitable representatives
- Decide whether subregional groups would be necessary and how they should be set up, recognising that not all interest groups and organisations can be on the RSG

The sectors made suggestions to the project team for sectors and subsectors to be represented and for suitable representatives either at the meetings or afterwards. At some meetings, there were no, or very few, representatives for a sector and no recommendations were made. The county meeting participants were unanimous in their opinion that subregional groups should be established to support the RSG. The division into three areas, reflecting biophysical rather than administrative characteristics, was the most popular suggestion.

Stakeholder Analysis
Stakeholders were grouped according to their sectoral interests, bearing in mind that there is a requirement that all four regional projects should harmonise their approach to stakeholder engagement as much as possible. The sectoral categories reflect those identified for the Finding Sanctuary Project, adapted to suit the Balanced Seas situation. A “Sectoral Spreadsheet” was developed which highlighted existing representation within key organisations and across the region, and helped to identify gaps.

Once the Facilitator had been appointed, the overall aims and objectives for engagement were defined and a structure that could deliver these was developed. The project team and facilitators then analysed stakeholder ‘Interest and Influence’ (a standard method used for stakeholder analysis) at regional level. This process was guided by the analysis done to date, a review of the stakeholder analysis completed for all the other MCZ projects, the national Project Delivery Guidance and project team knowledge.

Selection of sector representatives
Selection criteria for the RSG and LGs were drawn up based on the county meeting outcomes and subsequent discussions. Potential sector representatives should be:

- Knowledgeable about the entire sector, but with some knowledge of other sectors
- Respected and trusted by the sector, recognised as its ‘voice’, and with a ‘mandate’ from or approved by the sector to fulfil this role
- Willing and able to dedicate time to the work involved over the life of the project

- Able to communicate, listen and understand (both with other RSG members – to put across the views of the sector – and with their own sector – to feedback information about the work undertaken by the RSG).
- Willing to show respect to others on the RSG – able to work in partnership with other organisations, and listen and accept other people's points of views
- Respectful of the process to be followed
- Able to take in, and work with, new information
- Pro-active and enthusiastic and able to think 'outside the box'

The preliminary RSG list that had come out of the stakeholder analysis was further refined by asking "who is best placed to represent this sector and interest and bring a strategic, regional perspective to the group?". The Facilitators and Project Team made a decision from the onset that RSG membership would be kept to a practical and workable size. This meant adopting a limit of one representative from each organisation and wherever possible, asking similar organisations in the same sector to work together to field one representative on their collective behalf.

The list of possible members was compared to RSG membership from the other regional projects to maximise consistency across the projects. Once the project team had identified all possible sectors for the RSG, the project team phoned key contacts to see how they felt about the overall structure and asked to nominate their representative (see RSG Membership Annex 4.1). In some cases, meetings were held with organisations and sectoral representatives including commercial fishermen, ports and NGOs or direct contact with individual stakeholders through mail-outs and e-bulletins. The membership of the LGs was developed in the same way and sector representation reflects that of the RSG, but including some additional sectors that had expressed an explicit interest to be involved in a LG. A wider range of stakeholders were invited to Local Groups which were slightly larger.

The county meetings and early project work indicated that the sectors were not all equivalent in their structures and in the ease with which it was possible to find representatives. For both the RSG and LGs, there were some sectors for which it was particularly difficult to identify suitable representatives, given the size limitations of the groups. The following table explains some of the representation issues:

Sector	**Representation**
Recreation – water sports	This category covered a very wide range of subsectors, with several national umbrella groups that needed to be considered: • The RYA was widely considered to be able to represent most interests regionally, particularly motor and wind powered activities, with Cruising Association representatives invited onto Local Groups only. • Canoe England was recommended for their sector. • British Kite Surfing Association was recommended for their sector • BSAC covered diving interests
Recreational Seas Angling	Although the Angling Trust is a national organisation, many individual anglers felt that it does not represent all angling interests or local clubs. There was an extensive process to identify representatives for the RSG and the LGs. In view of the history of differences within the Angling Trust, it was decided to have a single independent angler on the RSG, and 2-3 representatives on each LG to represent different views and subregions of the project area.
Charterboats	The Professional Boatman's Association was considered to be the national organisation but not all stakeholders felt that they adequately represent their views. There was an extensive process to identify representatives for both the RSG and the LGs. A PBA member was recommended for the RSG and representation from local independent associations was sought and identified for the Local Groups

Commercial fisheries:	Fishery stakeholders consulted early in the process stressed the need for fair representation of the many different interests and subsectors within this large sector. A separate, informal meeting was held between the facilitator and representatives of a range of fishing interests to ask them their views. Participants felt that the range of gear types, vessel length and fishing grounds were all different subsectors that needed representation. Six sub-sectors were finally identified: under and over 10s (local interests), under 10s static gear, shellfish, beam trawling (FPO), under 10s trawling and over 10s trawling.
Industry: ports, renewables, aggregates	These national industries nominated representatives themselves for the RSG and each Local Group. For renewables, an additional representative for tidal energy was invited on to the Solent Local Group
Environment NGOs	It was agreed that all the main environmental NGOs in the regional should be represented
Archaeology and Heritage	Agreed should be represented; English Heritage was considered the appropriate umbrella organisation and arranged representatives for each group
Coastal partnerships:	There are several important coastal partnerships in the region are already playing key roles in the project, providing information on stakeholders, helping to publicise the project and generally supporting project activities. We see these roles continuing and strengthening.
Government agencies	Some people felt government agencies should not be represented on the RSG or that their numbers/role should be limited. However, the role of these bodies is to provide the key advice that will ensure that the recommendations are feasible for implementation and acceptable at the end of the process. The. MMO, Natural England, Natural England, and Environment Agency were represented.
Local government:	Local Authorities were represented at the County Council level on the Local Groups and by the Chair of the Coastal Special Interest Group, Local Government Association on the RSG. Representatives of other Local Authorities participated in meetings where appropriate and necessary
Other	The Crown Estate and Ministry of Defence, as key national stakeholders, sat on the RSG and attended LG meetings where necessary

Communication with stakeholders

A stakeholder database was compiled of contacts identified in a variety of ways including one to one discussions, networking at events, collection of contacts in the public domain via internet searches, and previous contacts of the team. The database was constantly updated throughout the project. A privacy agreement was sent to all those listed and they were asked if they wished to be kept on the database for project updates and contacted in the future for data collection. All contacts were given the opportunity to unsubscribe at any time and were archived as such.

D. Involvement and engagement of international stakeholders

International stakeholders have taken part in the process in the south-east either by participating in meetings or through correspondence. They started as NCS, but representatives of the Dutch, Belgian and French fishing industries began to participate in RSG meetings in January 2011. The project team also met with the French MPA Agency in 2010 and exchanged some information, and shared experiences of the two processes.

E. Process used to identify and develop recommendations.

As required by the national project delivery guidance, the process was developed through an iterative process.

Overview of process

The recommendations were developed through a series of professionally facilitated meetings of the RSG and LGs, organized by the Balanced Seas project team. Three progress reports were submitted to the Science Advisory Panel, before the Draft Final Recommendations in June 2011, and the Final Recommendations in the first week of September 2011 (as a result of an extension that was agreed for all four projects, the original date for submission having been set at 1st June).

The tight time frame for the project was a major challenge for all involved in the process, and was raised as a concern on numerous occasions by the stakeholders. For the project team, a significant implication was that it was very difficult, and often not possible, to prepare materials sufficiently early that meeting participants had time to review them in advance; equally it was often very difficult to report on meeting outcomes in a timely fashion. The RSG was sufficiently concerned that it wrote, as a group, to the Minister following submission of the Third Progress Report. As part of his visits to all regional MCZ projects, the Minister paid a visit to the RSG, at the end of their July meeting, to respond to their questions.

The table below shows the overall process and time line of the project

Date	Event
Feb 2010	Balanced Seas Regional Stakeholder Group (RSG) set up
Apr 2010	Introductory RSG meeting (see RSG Meeting Report 1)
May 2010	Introductory Local Group meetings (see Local Group Meeting Reports 1)
June 2010	Identified 'Broad Areas of Interest' (BAIs) (see RSG Meeting Report 2) 1st Progress Report submitted to the SAP
July 2010	SAP Feedback on the First Progress Report Local Groups provided feedback on the BAIs (see Local Group Meeting Reports 2) CRPMEM Nord - Pas de Calais / Picardie
Sep 2010	2 Interim Local Group meetings: Solent and London RSG Meeting 4
Oct 2010	RSG Meeting 5 2nd Progress Report submitted to the SAP
Nov 2010	SAP Feedback on 2nd Progress Report Local Groups provided feedback on sites (see Local Group Meeting Reports 3) Offshore Task Group Meeting 1
Dec 2010	Inshore Task Group Mtg 1 (Essex/Thames/North Kent and Solent/Sussex/South Kent)
Jan 2011	2 Subgroup meetings: Dover Sites Meeting; Beachy Head Sites Meeting RSG Meeting 6
Feb 2011	3 Subgroup meetings: Kingmere Site Meeting, Selsey Bill / Pagham Sites Meeting;– Isle of Wight Sites Meeting Inshore Task Group Meeting 2 RSG Meeting 7 3rd Progress Report submitted to the SAP
Mar 2011	SAP Feedback on 3rd Progress Report 3 Subgroup meetings: Thames Site Meeting; Blackwater, Crouch, Roach and Colne Estuaries Site Meeting ; North Essex and Suffolk Meeting

	Offshore Task Group Meeting 2
Apr 2011	Local Groups provide feedback on sites (see Local Group Meeting Reports 4) RSG Meeting 8
May 2011	RSG Meeting 9a & RSG Meeting 9b
June 2011	Submission of Draft Final Recommendations
July 2011	SAP Feedback on Draft Final Recommendations 6 Local/Subgroup Meetings: RSG Meeting 10 (and visit of Minister)
Aug 2011	RSG Meeting 11

Stakeholder group meetings and facilitation

The facilitation team, 3KQ (a company based in Tonbridge) was selected through a University of Kent tender process and worked under contract. They were responsible for developed the process and strategy for delivery of the recommendations, and avoided expressing any view on the issues. They worked closely with the project team, preparing process plans for each meeting and holding regular planning meetings and teleconferences with the project team.

The RSG met on a regular basis, largely determined by the timetable developed nationally for the MCZ project as a whole and in collaboration with the other three regional projects to avoid as much as possible clashes of meeting dates since some individuals sat on more than one project stakeholder group. The LGs meetings were held in relation to the needs for review of, and input into, the RSG's work. There were a total of 50 meetings. The venue was selected to suit the maximum number of participants and to be in reach of public transport. If a suitable venue was available, it was used on a regular basis which provided a feeling of familiarity and made logistical arrangements easier. Consideration was given to the time of day of the meeting, but because of the amount of work to be undertaken, the majority were day long meetings – in some cases for subgroups it was possible to arrange meetings in the afternoon which was preferable for the fisheries sector.

	RSG and Task Forces	**No of participants**	**Local Groups and sub groups**	**No of participants**
April 2010	RSG 1 Introductory meeting, London	29		
May 2010			Introductory meetings: Essex/Thames/North Kent/Suffolk, London Sussex/South Kent, Brighton Solent/IOW/Hants, Southampton	 25 28 25
June 2010	RSG 2 – Day 1, London	27		
June 2010	RSG 2 – Day 2, London	27		
July 2010	RSG 3, London	30	LG 2: Essex/Thames/North Kent/Suffolk, London Sussex/South Kent, Brighton Solent/IOW/Hants, Southampton	 26 28 30
Sept 2010	RSG 4, London	30	Informal LG Meetings: Essex/Thames/North Kent/Suffolk, London Solent/IOW/Hants, Southampton	 18 20
Oct 2010	RSG 5, London	30		

Nov 2010	Offshore Task Group 1, London	12	LG 3: Essex/Thames/North Kent/Suffolk, London Sussex/South Kent, Brighton Solent/IOW/Hants, Southampton	 28 28 26
Dec 2010	Essex/North Kent/Thames Inshore Task Group, London	13		
Dec 2010	Solent, Sussex and South Kent Inshore Task Group, London	17		
Jan 2011	RSG 6 – Day 1, London	32	Beachy Head Sites Meeting, Southwick, East Sussex Dover Sites Meeting, Folkestone	19 14
Jan 2011	RSG 6 – Day 2, London	30		
Feb 2011	Inshore Task Group – all sites, London	23	IOW Sites Meetings, Cowes, IOW Kingmere Site Meeting, Shoreham-by-Sea Selsey Bill and Pagham Sites Meeting, Chichester	20 14 14
Feb 2011	RSG 7, London	30		
Mar 2011	Offshore Task Group, London	20	Blackwater/Colne/Crouch/Roach Sites Meeting, Maldon, Essex Suffolk and North Essex Stakeholder Meeting, Ipswich, Suffolk Thames Site Meeting, London	20 11 15
April 2011	RSG 8 – Day 1, London	35	LG 4: Essex/Thames/North Kent/Suffolk, London Sussex/South Kent, Brighton Solent/IOW/Hants, Southampton	 27 23 31
April 2011	RSG 8 – Day 2, London	32		
May 2011	RSG 9A, London	33		
May 2011	RSG 9B, London	29		
July 2011	RSG 10, London	37	LG 5 – Sites Meetings: Essex/Thames/Suffolk, London North Kent, Sittingbourne Solent/IOW/Hants, Southampton West Sussex, Chichester, East Sussex, Brighton South Kent, Folkestone	 28 26 28 22 22 14
Aug 2011	RSG 11 – Day 1, London	35		
Aug 2011	RSG 11 - Day 2, London	32		
Sept 2011	RSG 12 – Final Meeting and Event			

The meetings generally followed a similar format starting with presentations from the MPA planner describing the current status of the recommendations, new data made available and the work to be undertaken at the meeting. Participants then moved into multi-sector working groups, usually divided on a geographical basis, to work through the tasks identified. Project team members supported the

working groups, recording the discussion and presenting the data in the form of an interactive PDF on screen. At appropriate intervals, the group moved into plenary to discuss the results of the working groups. Plenary sessions were facilitated by the main 3KQ facilitator

Building and describing stakeholder support for draft MCZs

The Balanced Seas Project has not, in any formally and explicitly recorded sense, measured individual stakeholder or sectoral 'levels of support' for any particular site or for the overall network. The project team and facilitator made it clear to sector representatives that a 'consensus-building' process was being used, particularly within the RSG, which was responsible for the recommendations. Of particular significance in the approach was that agreement of stakeholder group members was confirmed at each stage of the planning process (i.e. when discussing whether a particular site could go forward to the next stage of discussion, agreement in the room was confirmed). If agreement was not possible, the approach wass to i) carefully note the concerns and move on, usually having agreed an action to help address the concerns (if the proposal was not accepted); OR ii) where time/energy allowed, discussing the concerns and attempting to develop a solution that everyone in the group was content with and that would be accepted. Sometimes these agreements were quite robust, but in other cases they would change on reflection, or if previously absent RSG members rejoined the discussion. In such situations, the site would be discussed again, until the group is in a position of at least being able to 'live with' the way forward.

The facilitator's experience of other consensus-building processes suggested that more frequent and explicit measurement of levels of support is usually unnecessary during the course of such a process and can be risky because it invites a return to a 'positional bargaining' approach where people tend to 'over claim' on any particular 'unit of focus' (e.g. a site) being measured, in preparation for difficult bargaining ahead when they may be looking to 'win' with minimal cost. This is at odds with the approach the project was fostering – i.e. working together towards win/win outcomes (which often exist beyond the simple territory of a single unit of focus, often in a whole complex of sub-agreements).

Reporting

A transcript of all plenary sessions at the meeting was made; for RSG meetings by the facilitation teams' recorder and, for LG meetings, by a member of the project team. Towards the end of the process, an audio recorder was used at meetings for the purpose of being able to check participants' comments. The transcript for each meeting was edited into a report, using a standardised template for all meetings. The draft meeting reports were circulated to participants who were asked to provide corrections; once these were made the reports were posted on the Balanced Seas website. The meeting reports do not attribute comments unless requested in a specific instance e.g. where agreed and necessary for clarity in the record. Reports of all the meetings can be downloaded from http://www.balancedseas.org

Evaluation

At the end of most meetings, participants were asked to fill out an evaluation form, designed by 3KQ and the project team. The results of the each evaluation were made available as an appendix to the meeting report. The evaluation form provided at the final RSG meeting in August 2011 addressed participant's views and opinions on the process as a whole. The results are provided in Appendix 4.2 of this report.

Feedback from both RSG and LG members was largely favourable. The main issues that were raised tended to be:

- the tight time frame of the project given the amount of work required (which contributed to the more specific concerns about late delivery of reports and meeting materials),
- the absence of, or uncertainty about, much of the ecological data available (a problem common to all marine planning exercises around the world;

- the lack of, or late provision of, clear national guidance for a number of key steps in the process, and
- the obstacle created by the fact that the MCZ process is such that management arrangements for sites are not determined until after designation of a site which means that stakeholders are unable to participate as fully as they would wish too as they were unable to assess the impact of any site on their activities.

These and other issues and challenges are discussed in more detail in section 2.7 below (section to be written by Hannah)

Role of the Project Team

The project team consisted of a Project Manager, MPA Planner, GIS Officer and Assistant GIS Officer, three liaison officers, two communications officers, an economist and a number of part time assistants. The responsibilities of the Project Team in terms of providing support to the stakeholders groups were laid out in the RSG and LG TOR. They followed a work plan that was determined in response to the national MCZ project work plan, and the team's work and financial management was overseen by the Balanced Seas Regional Project Board, chaired by Kent County Council and comprising representatives of the University of Kent, JNCC and Natural England.

1.4 Methods used to gather stakeholder knowledge and information

International information

The fishing representatives who attended RSG meetings on behalf of the French, Belgian and Dutch fishing industries provided tables and charts to the project team concerning the use of Balanced Seas waters by their fleets. The French representatives in particular provided a large amount of data.

National stakeholder knowledge, information and data

Early on in the process, spatial data layers were provided under several DEFRA contracts in order to present the location of various human activities (e.g. fishing, aggregates, renewables, cables and pipelines). These data layers were then updated by the relevant representatives on the RSG and Local Groups. During meetings, more detailed information was provided (e.g. relinquished aggregate areas, active or inactive cables, refined tidal energy areas) by the representatives themselves, and these comments were recorded in meeting reports to inform planning. Data sources are listed in Appendix 7.

Regional stakeholder knowledge

A great deal of regional data was provided to the project team, much of it relating to the ecological features of the region. The Wildlife Trusts and Seasearch provided their own survey data of ENG features , as well as additional species and habitats they considered to be rare and of importance in the southeast region, so that these might provide support for site recommendation. The Environment Agency provided information on not only the features of interest (e.g. their surveys of Smelt and Eel,) but also information on the regional importance of various waterbodies. A regional Environment Agency representative developed a database of biotope information using survey data from a very wide range of sources which could be analysed to provide supporting evidence of ENG features or general biodiversity richness. As the process progressed, the Wildlife Trusts were also in a position to implement direct surveys and provide verification data to confirm the presence or condition of a feature in a site. During meetings, representatives of all these organisations were able to provide expert advice to the RSG, helping them make regional decisions in meeting ENG targets.

Local Stakeholder knowledge

Compared with sectors such as aggregates and renewable energy there is little information on the spatial use of the sea by the commercial fishing industry and recreational sectors available through official sources, The FisherMap project was therefore developed by Finding Sanctuary, the pilot regional MCZ project, and subsequently adapted for use by all four Regional Projects, in order to collect spatial and economic data on fisheries, charter boats, sea angling and water sports.

Fishermap (or Stakmap as it is called when applied to non-fishery sectors) involves a questionnaire that the Liaison Officers used to obtain spatial and economic data from sea users. For commercial fisheries and charter boats, individual skippers or owners of vessels were interviewed. For the recreational sector (angling and water sports) the large number of individuals involved meant that it was be more beneficial in terms of raising awareness of the project and more cost effective to undertake interviews at the club or organisation level. Clubs and organisations varied in size from over 8000 for the recreational activity centres to an average of 100 members for angling clubs, 160 for dive clubs, 280 for kite surfing clubs and 500 for sailing clubs. Smaller recreational sectors such as canoeing and waterskiing had an average club size of 10 and 63 respectively.

Given the limited time and resources available for such data collection, and the large number of stakeholders involved in these sectors, all four projects agreed on the following sampling strategy, to ensure that adequate data was collected:

- **Commercial fisheries**: minimum of 50% of active <10m and >10m vessels registered at each of the 53 ports in the project area. MMO figures indicated 471 <10m vessels and 45 >10m vessels.
- **Charter boats**: minimum target of 20% of vessels in the project area, of which there are an estimated 200 registered angling charter boats, and 30 commercial dive boats. To ensure geographical spread this sector was targeted in the same way as commercial fisheries. Ports that charter vessels registered throughout the Balanced Seas region were identified and the 20% target figure applied to each of these.
- **Recreational sea angling (RSA)**: minimum target of 20% of clubs in the project area; priority given to largest clubs. Geographical spread for this sector was difficult to ensure as the details in the public domain for many of the clubs are out of date, and contact was heavily reliant upon clubs responding to posted letters. However, to help contact and ensure geographical representation, tackle shops throughout the region were contacted with the same information as the clubs, and posters and postcards advertising the project were provided for display.
- **Water sports** (canoeing, kayaking, rowing, diving, kite surfing, wind surfing, sailing and recreational boating, and activity centres): minimum target of 20% club and organisations within each Local Group geographical area (Hants/IoW/Solent; Sussex/South Kent; and Essex/Thames/North Kent). For sailing clubs, priority was given to clubs who came out top after a series of 6 criteria were applied to them. This aimed to ensure coastal coverage, whilst identifying clubs carrying out multiple activities throughout the year. The remaining recreational sectors were prioritised by their size and closeness to the coast.

The target for commercial fisheries was higher than that for the recreational sector because of the economic importance of fisheries, the proportionally greater potential impact of MCZs on the fisheries industry and the smaller size of the sector itself. A lower sampling target was felt adequate for recreational sectors as MCZs will have a lower potential socio-economic impact on them, and because of the large size of these sectors in relation to the resources available for data collection. The 20% target was also applied to the commercial charter boat sector as it was identified that within the Balanced Seas area the majority of charter vessels catered to recreational sea anglers and therefore by interviewing both sea angling clubs and charter vessels much information could be gathered by interviewing one or the other. Also, it was thought that charter vessels may not be impacted as much as commercial fishermen as their activities are on a much smaller scale and with only one gear type i.e. rod and line.

Summary of interviews undertaken:

- **Commercial fisheries**: Over 50% of boats were sampled at the majority of the ports in the region. 276 interviews were undertaken for the under 10's, 58 for the over 10's. Some ports and/or sub-sectors (e.g. 5 interviews undertaken for vessels over 15m) received additional data collecting effort where specific requests were received by stakeholders themselves.
- **Charter boats**: Over 20% of vessels were sampled at each port in the region. 77 angling charter vessel interviews were undertaken, nine of which included a second vessel totalling 86 vessels, representing 42% of the 203 vessels identified. 10 dive boats out of the 30 identified in the region have been interviewed representing 33%.
- **Recreational sea angling**: Over 20% of the clubs were sampled in each county in the region. A total of 72 interviews were undertaken including 57 clubs, eight individuals and seven informal groups, representing 36% of the 160 angling clubs in the project area, and over 6000 individuals.
- **Water sports**: Over 20% of the clubs were sampled in each county in the project region. A total of 296 interviews were undertaken, representing 56% of the 527 clubs and organisations identified.

The FisherMap/Stakmap project also served as an important means to communicate with stakeholders, and so some sectors/locations were sampled above the target levels where stakeholders willingly volunteered information.

1.5. Issues addressed/challenges at the process level

Incorporating higher quality seabed habitat data (MALSF English Channel Synthesis REC)
In February 2011, the Marine Aggregate Levy Sustainability Fund (MALSF) published the synthesis of two new surveys of the Central and Eastern English Channel. This represents a high-quality EUNIS-classified habitat map spanning more than half of the Balanced Seas project area (see Figure 2 below). The Synthesis REC study recognised that the distinction between rock- and sediment-based habitat types in the Central and Eastern English Channel was too coarse and consequently proposed twelve new EUNIS Level 3 habitat types that re-defined habitats as various forms of rock overlain with a thin veneer of sediment. The result is a more accurate depiction of the considerable habitat variation and complexity that occurs in the Channel, as well as an increased confidence in the mapped distribution of habitats. However, these new EUNIS habitat types do not have ENG targets associated with them and in order for them to be used effectively in the MCZ recommendation process they have been individually translated back into the previous EUNIS classifications prior to being incorporated into the broad-scale habitats map. Since the new 'rock and thin sediment' categories were translated back into sediment habitat types rather than rock, the incorporation of the Synthesis REC study has significantly increased the amount of sediment found in the Balanced Seas region and resulted in proportionally greater amounts necessary to meet the adequacy targets. For more detailed information on this issue, maps of the changes to broad-scale habitats and the associated discussions with stakeholders, please see RSG Meeting 8 Report.

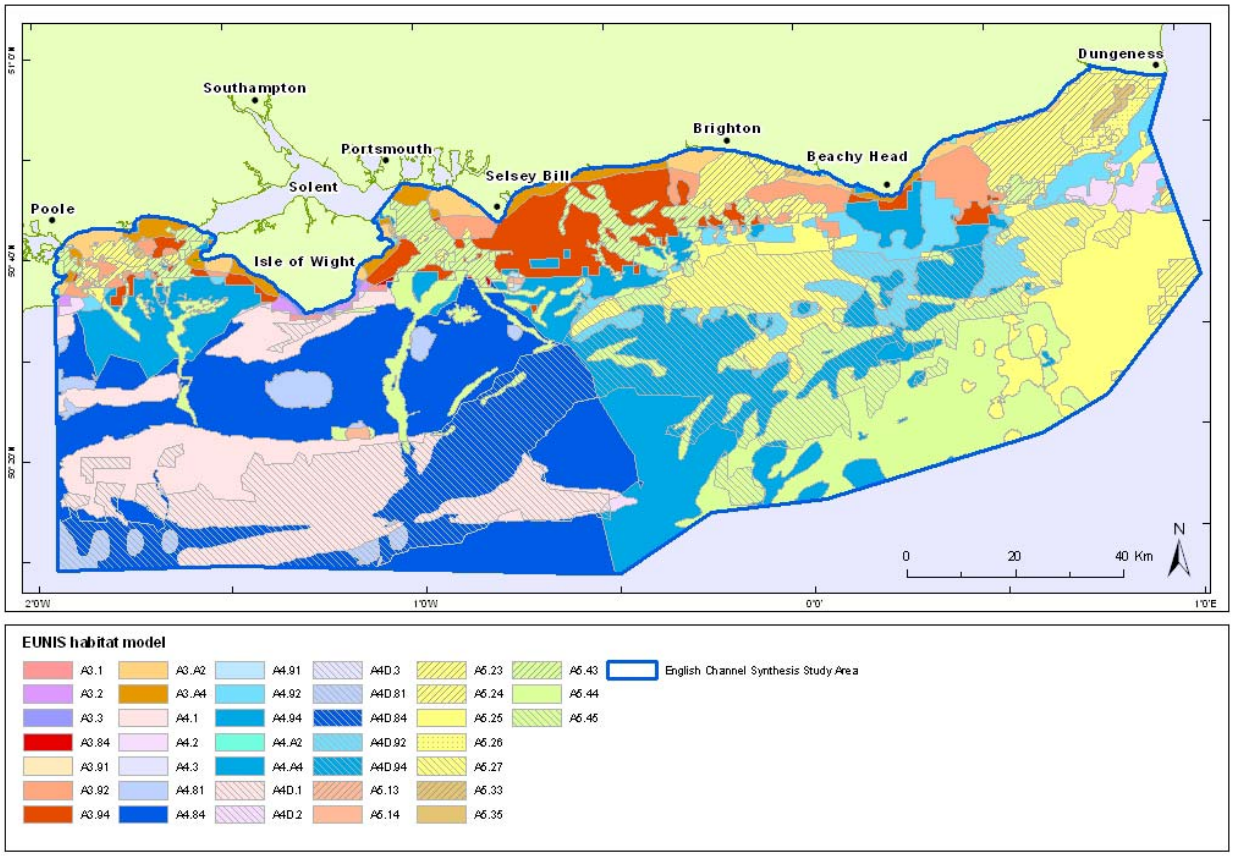


Figure 2. English Channel Synthesis Regional Environmental Characterisation (REC) EUNIS Level 3 habitats map and key to model classifications. Note the revised EUNIS Level 3 classifications.

The incorporation of the new REC data was accepted by the RSG as a necessary challenge to the process, given the increased quality of the habitat mapping. However, it has had some significant effects on the process and the resulting stakeholder support for sites. Large areas of habitat needed to be found to meet the shortfall targets that were created by the proportionally greater areas of sediment habitats found in the region, which required considerable amounts of processing and analysis time from the project team. Due to the late arrival of the REC data, the resulting areas that were selected by the RSG had less time for discussion in meetings, leading to the submission of option areas (rMCZ 29 or rMCZ 29.2) rather than building a consensus around a single site. Stakeholder support has also been somewhat negatively affected by the rapid creation of new sites where the only supporting evidence is the modelled broad-scale habitat data. Some stakeholders have questioned whether the improved data was of sufficiently higher quality and confidence to justify activity restrictions (in the case of certain sectors) across such large areas of important seabed. Stakeholders strongly believe that data used to identify rMCZs in such a short time should be subject to rigorous data verification prior to further steps being taken in the designation process to ensure that habitats are accurately mapped and, in the case of Reference Areas, the presence of features firmly verified.

Conservation Objectives

Many stakeholders have concerns about the scientific basis of the Vulnerability Assessment. Stakeholders have commented on the coarseness with which human activities are described in the underlying activities/pressures matrix, which they suggest may lead to inappropriate activity restrictions. Furthermore, the 12 new REC data EUNIS Level 3 habitats have not been included in the features/pressures sensitivity matrix and the VA work has involved assessing the sensitivity of the translated EUNIS Level 3 habitats, which has prevented the full use of higher quality, finer-scale data to inform the COs. Where 'rock and thin sediment' has been translated into sediment habitats, the COs have been set for sediment habitat sensitivities but some stakeholders think that rock sensitivity should be used. The fishing sector in particular has expressed a strong wish that their own expert knowledge of habitats, activity impacts and mitigation measures should be considered in the refinement of COs.

Identifying Reference Areas

Considerable effort has been spent by both local and regional stakeholders in identifying rRAs to meet the ENG criteria, but many stakeholders have expressed concern or serious opposition to this exercise. Given the far greater implications in terms of activity restrictions, for many, the RA discussion has had far too little time devoted to it compared with MCZs, with insufficient exploration of the activities likely to be affected, limited local stakeholder feedback on suggested sites and variable confidence in the ecological data being used to drive site selection.

Some stakeholders have suggested that this element of the project should be purely ecologically driven (i.e. RAs selected according to the best examples of each feature) rather than bringing socio-economic issues into the discussions. There is also uncertainty over the levels of acceptable mitigation for the list of activities considered "disturbing and damaging" (particularly anchoring) within RAs. Given this lack of clarity, sector representatives are understandably uncomfortable suggesting areas that will be subject to high levels of protection areas without due deliberation and care.

Offshore site management

The Balanced Seas project has involved representatives of the Dutch, French and Belgian fishing industry throughout the second half of the process. They have expressed strong objections about the MCZ process and the sites put forward. Management arrangements for sites within 6 nm within which these countries have historic fishing rights, and sites beyond 12 nm will be developed through the CFP process and it is understood that Defra is starting to address this. The UK fishing sector representatives have stated clearly their lack of support for all offshore sites, fearing that they may be disadvantaged if

management of UK activities is brought in before that for non-UK activities (although the Minister has given assurance that this will not be the case). Both UK and non-UK fishing sectors are particularly concerned by the fact that in this part of European waters there is very little room for displacement of fishing activities, given the crowded nature of the southern North Sea and English Channel and the large number of Natura sites currently being implemented.

Involvement of Stakeholder Groups beyond recommendations phase

Stakeholders have expressed a clear wish to continue their involvement in a process that may seriously affect their interests and livelihoods. Most stakeholders agree that extraordinary efforts have been made to reach consensus over MCZ locations wherever possible, and exceptional results have been produced. However, it is clearly recognised that this is only the first step in the process of designating MCZs and stakeholders are very keen to ensure that the underlying concepts behind their recommendations are not lost or significantly altered through the disengagement of stakeholder groups from any future stages in the process

Impact assessment

With the consolidation of a network of rMCZs, the focus of the work will shift towards producing the Impact Assessment (IA) for each sites, and the regional summary IA. A cumulative impact assessment of the network as a whole (recommendations from all four projects together) will be produced by the SNCBs. Analysis of economic data will be undertaken to ascertain the costs and benefits of each rMCZ site, including the costs of potential management measures associated with achieving the Conservation Objectives.

1.6 Stakeholder comments regarding the MCZ process and resulting network

During the final RSG meeting, stakeholders were given the opportunity to make comment on aspects of the process and the network as a whole. Comments made regarding individual sites have been included in the site reports; this section gives the *verbatim* comments relating to process and the network.

Sector:	Recreation	Organisation:	RYA

- There remains a lack of understanding at local level & district of some of the parties involved.
- The data/science may be best available but is often inadequate for decision taking. Time.money must be made available to rectify this before decisions are reached.
- The exclusion of socio-economics from the SAP remit was a mistake & will threaten the coherence of the network.

Sector:	Recreation	Organisation:	Canoe England

- Re-occuring concerns from the floor of an inconsistency in classifying Conservation Objectives. Will require to be reconciled for the proposed consultation for Balanced Seas and across the other regional projects.
- Continuing uncertainty and lack of confidence in data. The project progresses to a conclusion with this as the backdrop. Local knowledge frequently challenges the data under discussion and used to determine Conservation Objectives. Over reliance on the precautionary principle.
- A comment from the floor was highly pertinent. "Do not be process driven and rather deal with the reality of the situation". This was a reference to data and objectives. I have sensed RSG members on occasion have been directed to certain positions to meet the objectives of the project, when there was a general feeling from the floor against that direction.
- Consistency, it keeps cropping up.
- Planned local meetings by NE and JNCC should be evening events to enable stakeholders to attend outside the working day.
- Work of RSG could have been helped supported by impact assessment data. Timescales of this process has been at the rush.
- Conservation interests are giving the impression they are promoting a view that sacrifices the interests of local communities in favour of a purist approach to conservation. Sea defences at Selsey are a particular example. This view needs to be balanced with the reality of the socio-economic world we live in.

Sector:	Recreation	Organisation:	Kitesurfing BKSA

- Taking a national overview of local sites with local complexities needs to be done VERY carefully. You cannot tar every site with the same brush and expect the same results.
- Inshore - Sense needs to be applied when dealing with all sites specifically from my sector's viewpoint the inshore. Banning inherently normal activities need special consideration and foresight.
- Safety should always remain TOP priority in allocating sites. Do not allow sectors to become squeezed into dangerous areas.

Sector:	Sea Angling	Organisation:	

- My main concern from my sector is the terms 'maintain' to 'recover'. We would rather see 'maintain+' keep to the level of current activity with voluntary controls.
- It is important to engage with local community to allow them to 'buy in' to MCZ to create a workable MCZ network.

Sector:	Industry	Organisation:	Ports

- Co-existence of some activities put forward will not be appropriate and will not show as compatible in VAs, therefore from our perspective it would make more sense to exclude these than create extensive management issues for activities that have to continue for wider benefit of UK e.g. cannot stop port operations. The approach to excluding non-compatible port activities from dMCZs needs to be checked that it has been consistent across project areas (FS, Irish Seas and Net Gain) as Iain not sure it has been approached the same way
- Any areas that get put forward on 'poor' evidence will not have stakeholder support. Important those where evidence base is sound are only put forward first and evidence base for others to be worked on. It is not acceptable to restrict activities on poor data or to put onus of proof onto operators.

Sector:	Fishing - independent	Organisation:	Local Fishing Rep

- Overall I expect the network to fluctuate and change just like the advice from the SNCBs. This is extremely unsettling when passing info to local stakeholders.
- dMCZ 17. Opportunity lost because of inconsistenciesin the C.O. This results in possibility of losing the original Overfalls Group area. The larger sites will be contested vigourously.
- We are unhappy to leave the process at this stage because further developments will change the reults of 18 months work.
- Come the public consultation the process will be tested. I feel most comments and reactions will look like an emotional first LG meeting because some people will be ill informed. This could result in a step backwards.

Sector:	Fishing - FPO, beam trawling	Organisation:	SWFPO, NFFO

- The term "recover" is misleading. Leaving sea bed areas undisturbed/fallow does not necessarily mean the area recovers to acceptable state. Preditary invasive species will flood into these areas as a result of no activity & these may well irrevocably alter these areas. This process is at best an experiment. It must be taken into account that co-existance (current) of features/species, with activity, has still resulted in the current levels of features/species. With the reduction of effort over the last decade, a level of "recovery" is already happening.
- Activity data used by Natural England is far too generic to make recover/maintain decisions. More detail is required, for such a serious/onerous decision with far reaching consequences.

Sector:	Aggregates	Organisation:	BMAPA

- Lack of consistency/join up between the network across the four regional projects.
- Ongoing uncertainties over VA and activity exposure / associated management / license implications - even @ end of process.
- Without resolving fisheries management out to 200nm, the application + effectiveness of the network will be compromised and burden/impact marine users/activities inconsistently.

Sector:	Industry	Organisation:	UK Chamber of Shipping

- The right of innocent passage under UNCLOS must be recognised. In no case must measures be taken against British Industries which cannot be imposed on international counterparts.
- Recognising the overriding importance of UK maritime (>90% trade) and domestic transport, management should not be put in place which restricts the operation and development of port / terminal / anchorage infrastructure.
- Prior to the designation of sites, their scientific validity must be confirmed in order that their worth can be demonstrated.
- Reference Areas must only be established where unaffected by positive or negative anthropogenic impacts and where other similar habitats exist for them to act as a reference for.

Sector:	Conservation	Organisation:	RSPB

- The RSPB has general concern that the network the RSG has recommended, and which meets ENG targets as far as possible, will be eroded pre- and /or post- public consultation due to pressure over data concerns and socio-economic concerns. Therefore we are worried we will not end up with an ecologically coherent network.
- We have some concerns about how tightly round features boundaries have been drawn (e.g. Beachy Head) so that they may not protect the ecological feature adequately.
- The RSPB is pleased that seabirds are included as additional features of ecological importance, but disappointed we do not have Conservation Objectives for seabirds. Though we recognise this is down to SNCB guidance not Balanced Seas.
- It should be stressed that socio-economics have already been taken into account in putting forward the network. The level of scrutiny on the socio-economic data used in the Impact Assessments should be the same as on the ecological data.

Sector:	Conservation	Organisation:	Wildlife Trust

- The locations of many sites are felt to be sound and do reflect area of particular habitat and species data. We do have concerns that the area boundaries and sizes have been significantly altered to reduce socio-economic impacts, often at the expense of integrity of the sites and will reduce their value for ecological conservation.
- Similarly we have great concerns over the Conservation Objectives with some base on poor or insubstantial activity data. There are many maintain targets, some sites are entirely maintain, in which case there will be a business as usual approach and conservation gain will be very limited.
- We also believe that for the network to be effective all sites must be designated and there should be no further reduction in size.

Sector:	Marine Ecology	Organisation:	Seasearch

- I am concerned that many compromises have already been made to accommodate socioeconomic interests at the expense of ecological integrity. There is little spare capacity in achieving the ENG targets so we cannot afford to lose more sites through the forthcoming stages in the process. There needs to be a mechanism to ensure that the final network is large and strong enough to function ecologically and restore the sea to health.
- I am concerned that the vulnerability assessment has not been applied consistently or based on science in all cases. Data on uses of areas needs to be verified before assessments are made on impacts.
- It needs to be recognised that some biogenic reef FOCI and other FOCI are reliant on the broadscale habitats on which they occur being protected in order to develop and expand.
- It needs to be clear where a CO is maintain on the basis of no overlap with an impacting activity.
- The REC synthesis data represents an improvement in broadscale habitat maps. The finer detail needs to be used, particularly relating relating to rock with a sediment veneer. This has been simplified to a sediment category. This is clearly problematic as highlighted by the fact that known important rock reef features are not apparent e.g. Kingmere and Worthing Lumps (16), Sovereign Shoals (13.1) and Mixon Hole, Hounds (25.2) and Bracklesham Balls (omitted from network). I suggest rock with sediment should be treated as rock in the VA.
- Maintain and recover terminology has been problematic as it relates more to activities than to the feature condition e.g. recent byelaw put in 24.2 Fareham leads to a maintain objective even though it is recognised that the feature needs to recover.

Sector:	Conservation	Organisation:	Marine Conservation Society

- Sites inshore are too small to be viable and show any ecological benefit.

- Recover should be conservation objective for all broadscale habitats from bottom towed fishing.
- Offshore sites must be protected from UK and other member state vessels.
- Why have many "recover" measures been reduced to "maintain". Very unambitious.
- Looking like many paper parks will be created with limited recovery to favourable status according to MCS (which is at the point where maximum successional state has been achieved) (e.g. Connell & Slatyer 1977).
- General comment for all sites - MCS wants recovery in all sites. Maintain should not be an objective at the site level as this creates "paper parks" where MCZ status will achieve nothing.

Sector:	Public Authority	Organisation:	Kent & Essex IFCA

- Careful consideration will need to be given to what level of management/enforcement will be required for each site and how this will be funded.
- Limitations in funding/resources will impact upon what can be achieved.
- Careful consideration will need to be given to [how?] sites will be monitored and how this will be prioritised.

Sector:	Public Authority	Organisation:	Southern IFCA

- The conservation objectives should only be 'recover' if there is evidence that the levels of activity currently are having a negative impact on the feature - if there is doubt about levels of activity or extent of features - the default should be 'maintain'. The COs are already precautionary (for conservation) therefore, no more 'precaution' should be added where there is doubt over data. This is a difficult process to other designations (EMS), & a precautionary approach is not to be applied according to the guidance. A precautionary principle should be applied to socio-economics - if in doubt that activity is causing damage, assume it isn't - as otherwise, livelihoods are being impacted perhaps un-necessarily. Also, consistency should be maintained eg 'maintain' CO, changed from 'recover' on IFCA recommendation (Kent & Essex) in dMCZ 7 for BSH, but 'further assessment needed' stated for dMCZ 19 on Southern IFCA recommendation that 'recover' be altered to 'maintain'.
- As the designation of seagrass is way over targt - in 5+ sites (in ≥ 8 areas) - & over the target area (m2), the IFCA believe the proposed designationin Alum Bay dMCZ 20 should be dropped. The seagrass there was confirmed in recent surveys (by the IFCA & WT) to be the weakest examples (Totland & Colwell Bays) in the existing (SEMS) & proposed designations (& Fareham Creek MMO byelaw protection - going to IFCA byelaw).
- The 'recover' CO in Alum Bay for seagrass will impact upon potting activity. Support for designation here by fishing sector will be threatened, as eg of seagrass beds are weak - IFCA feel that therefore there is high risk of non-compliance to any restrictions / code of conduct. The Southern IFCA believe that there is adequate protection of seagrass without this designation.
- Seagrass beds a feature of: Needles (dMCZ 20); Yarmouth-Cowes (dMCZ 23); Norris-Ryde (dMCZ 19)
- Bembridge (dMCZ 22); Pagham Harbour (dMCZ 25.1); and...current designations: Thames Estuary SSSI; Portsmouth Harbour SPA; Southampton Water (Test River) - SAC/SPA

Sector:	Public Authority	Organisation:	Sussex IFCA

- There is a clear need to gather more data across the network to identify where, within the draft zones, the features which have Conservation Objectives associated with them are located. Without the provision of such information reaching sensible local agreements to deliver codes of conduct which are realistic and ageed will be more difficult and are less likely to be deliverable.

- There is a need to facilitate networks of stakeholders to further the COnservation Objectives, through management measures, it is therfore useful to make sure that the momentum developed through the Balanced Seas process is maintained.

Sector:	French Fisheries	Organisation:	CRPMEM Nord - Pas de Calais / Picardie

- As we said in the feedback form of the 4th iteration, the overlapping of the dMCZ network to the European Natura 2000 Network and the increasing competition for space with marine aggregates and windfarms is a big concern for the French fishermen. As a consequence, the maritime space is highly divided, especially in the eastern part of the Channel and in the North Sea. In a context of Maritime Spatial Planning in the EU, a communication from the commission to the European parliament, the council, the European economic and social committee and the committee of the regions (Brussels, 17 December 2010, COM(2010) 771) states that “the catching sector needs flexible access in order to respond to changes in distribution patterns of fish stocks. [...] The need to ensure coherence in spatial plans between sea areas becomes apparent in the context of fisheries management, because of the mobility of the resource and because such decisions are taken at EU level in the CFP”. The actual division of the seas does not respect this engagement.
- The eastern part of the Channel is a small region with a lot of activities inside (windfarm, fisheries, commercial shipping, marine aggregate and MPAs) and it’s the same thing on the French side.
- Moreover, a fishing ground important for the French fishing fleet does not mean necessarily it is a fishing ground heavily fished. All depends of the fishing strategy: attribution of quota, presence/absence of species not under quota, seasonality of species and regulation of the activity (in a UE context or not).
- The fleet from Nord-Pas de Calais / Picardie, and mainly from Boulogne-sur-Mer, 1st fishing port in France (in tons and value) is also impacted by the Net Gain project and we fear to have more restriction again with the implementation of the LDMN within the Scottish waters.
- We understand the international engagement of the UK but we hope that the strong regulation of the fishing industry from a European point of view will be taken in account (fishing effort and TAC and quota are constantly decreasing) in the implementation of the management measure and, as a consequence, that our sector will not be the big loser in this process.

Sector:	French Fisheries	Organisation:	Normandy

- My sector can't be agreed with the combination of boundaries 21, 14, 17 and 29. These areas are adjacent to pSAC Wight-Barfleur.
- There are two large reference areas too (14 and 10) so that it is not acceptable for trawling and dredging (29).
- If you look at the north of Normandy, and if you add pSAC, MCZ, aggregates and wind farms, there is no place for fisheries sector any more.
- It's very difficult to define the real impact in the sector because we have to take into account the availability of the resources, the quota possibilities delivered[?] by EC.

Sector:	Dutch Fisheries	Organisation:	Visned

- Please take socio economic considerations in full considerationduring process of designating sites and deciding on boundaries.
- Let management measures be "weighed" at overall level instead of doing do at site level. The latter leading to micro management with [?] measure.
- Include RACs in the deliberation process on management measures. Same for backing member states.

2. The MPA network in the Balanced Seas region

This section describes the MPA network of existing protected areas and rMCZs within the Balanced Seas region and how it meets the ENG targets.

Section 2.1 provides a set of summary maps showing the network of rMCZs and rRAs, how they relate to the existing MPAs (SACs, pSACs and SPAs) and what broad-scale habitats they capture.

Section 2.2 describes the contribution of existing MPAs as assessed by Natural England and the JNCC (referred to as the 'gap analysis').

Section 2.3 explains the extent to which the recommended MPA network configuration - rMCZs, rRAs and existing MPAs - meets the ENG targets.

2.1 Network overview

In the Balanced Seas region, the recommended MPA network is presented as two alternative network options, since the RSG have put forward two configurations of one particular site (rMCZ 29 and rMCZ 29.2) where the sector representatives could not reach agreement on a single option. The RSG recognises that the Impact Assessment will demonstrate the economic and social implications of each of the options (rMCZ 29 and 29.2) which will assist in the decision-making process.

The recommended MPA network comprises:

- 30 recommended MCZs
- 25 recommended RAs (one of which falls outside of rMCZs and therefore represents an additional MCZ in its own right)
- all existing protected areas (SACs, pSACs, SPAs and SSSIs).

Maps of all sites making up the developing MPA network, and contributing to the ENG targets, are shown below, as follows:

Map 1 – rMCZs as identified by the Balanced Seas RSG.

Map 2 – rMCZs with the larger existing protected areas (SSSIs, SACs, pSACs and SPAs).

Map 3 – rMCZs with existing protected areas (SACs, SPAs), in relation to the broad-scale habitats EUNIS Level 3 map (UKSeaMap/MESH v7 JNCC).

Map 4 – recommended rRAs as identified by the Balanced Seas RSG.

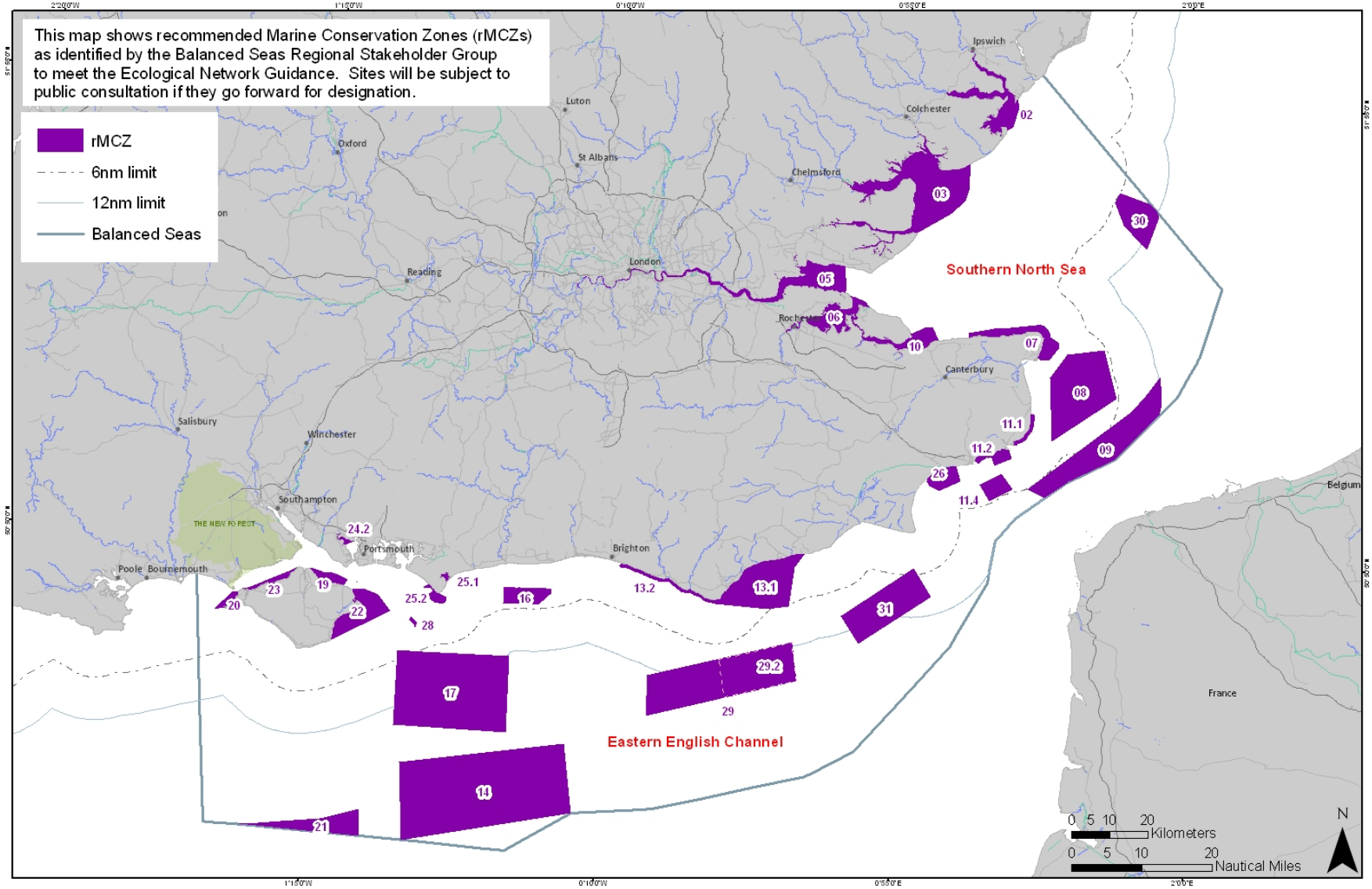
Map 1. Final Recommendations (September 2011)

BalancedSeas

Recommended Marine Conservation Zones (rMCZs)

Version 1.0
Scale 1:863,298
Projection UTM Zone

BalancedSeas



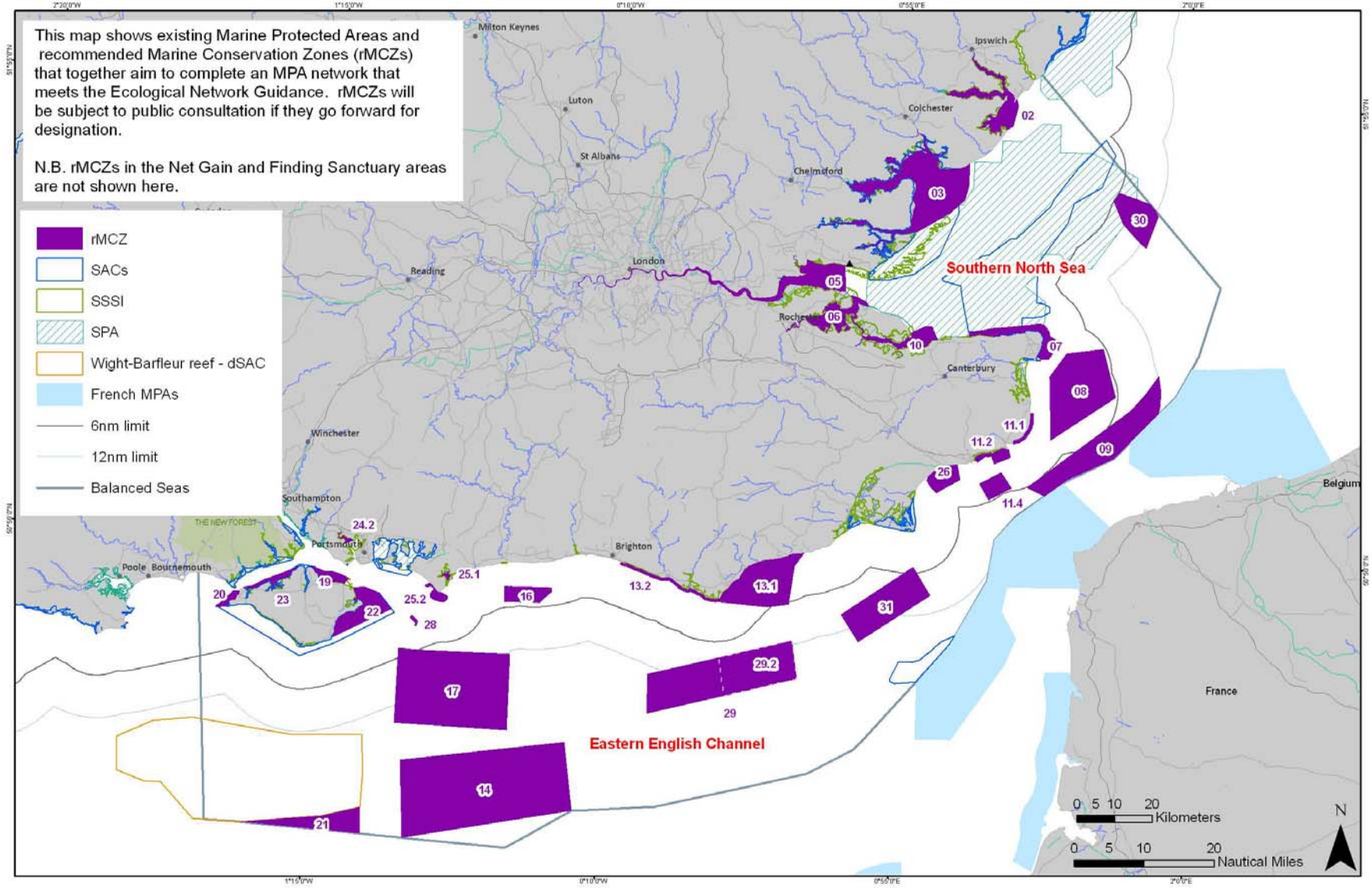
Map 2. Final Recommendations (September 2011)

rMCZs and Existing MPAs

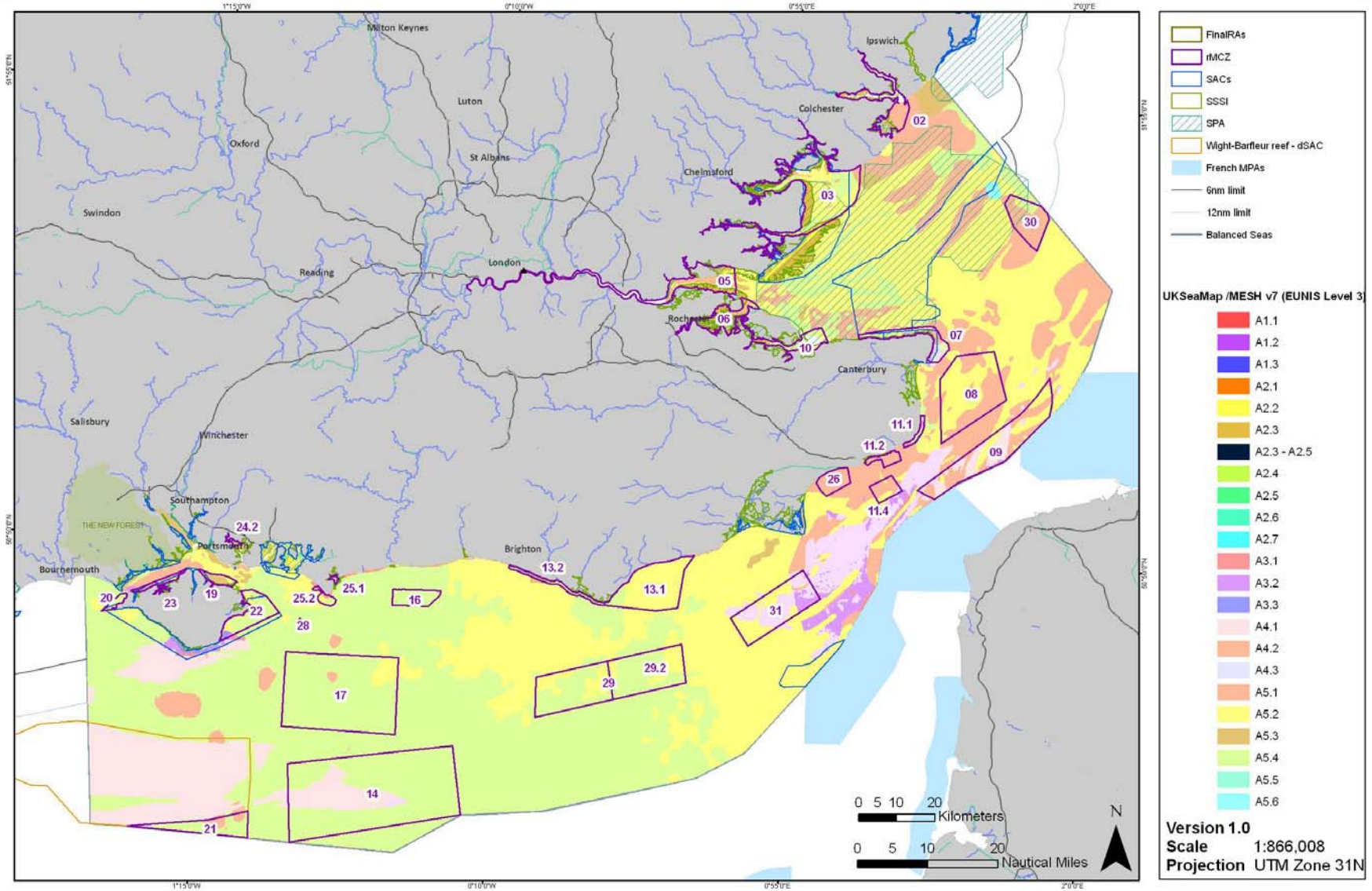
Version 1.0
Scale 1:863,298
Projection UTM Zone 31N

This map shows existing Marine Protected Areas and recommended Marine Conservation Zones (rMCZs) that together aim to complete an MPA network that meets the Ecological Network Guidance. rMCZs will be subject to public consultation if they go forward for designation.

N.B. rMCZs in the Net Gain and Finding Sanctuary areas are not shown here.

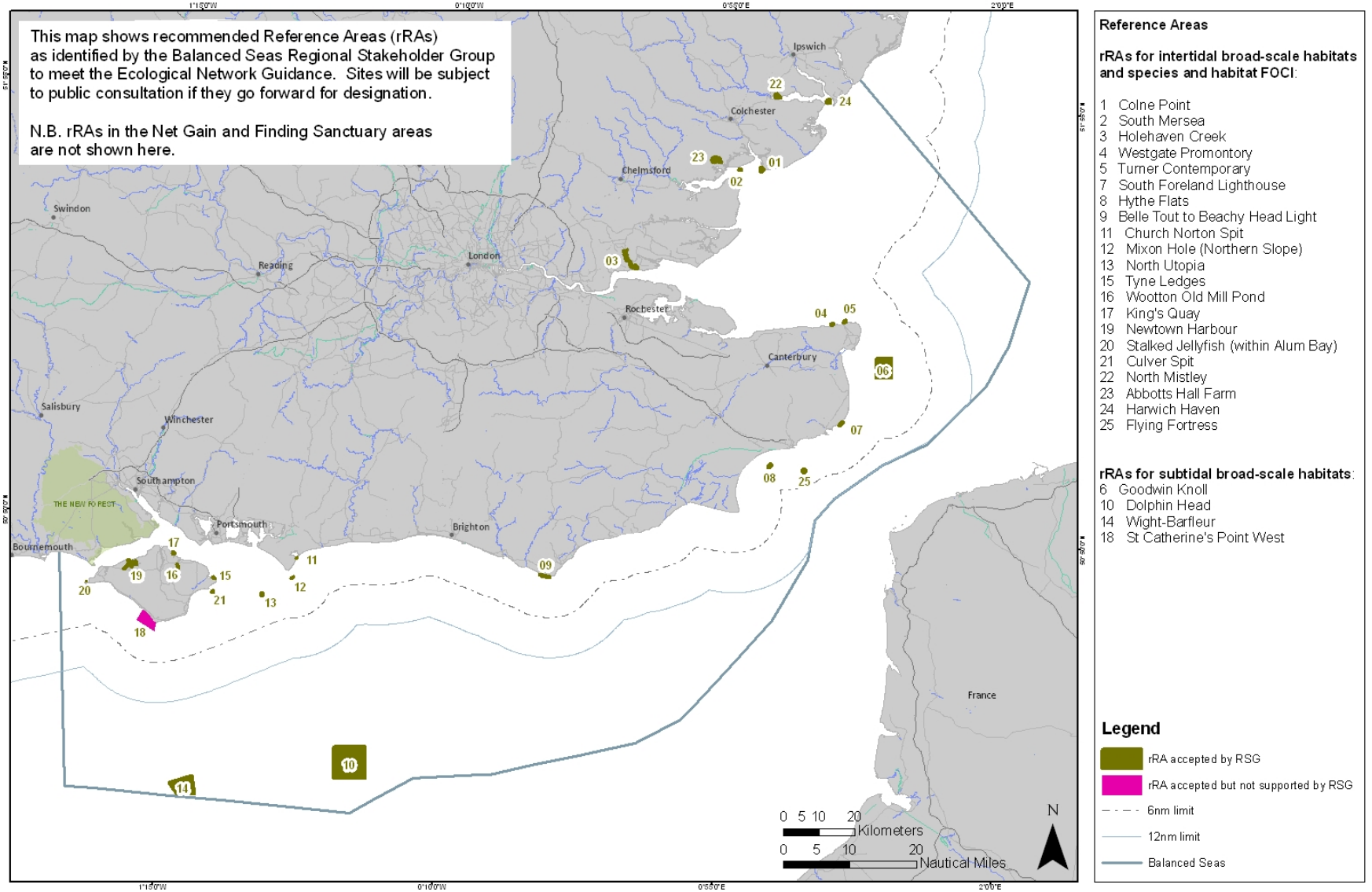


rMCZs, MPAs and Broad-Scale Habitats (UKSeaMap/MESH v7)



Recommended Reference Areas (rRAs)

Version 1.0
Scale 1:916,223
Projection UTM Zone 31N



Reference Areas

rRAs for intertidal broad-scale habitats and species and habitat FOCI:

1 Colne Point
2 South Mersea
3 Holehaven Creek
4 Westgate Promontory
5 Turner Contemporary
7 South Foreland Lighthouse
8 Hythe Flats
9 Belle Tout to Beachy Head Light
11 Church Norton Spit
12 Mixon Hole (Northern Slope)
13 North Utopia
15 Tyne Ledges
16 Wootton Old Mill Pond
17 King's Quay
19 Newtown Harbour
20 Stalked Jellyfish (within Alum Bay)
21 Culver Spit
22 North Mistley
23 Abbotts Hall Farm
24 Harwich Haven
25 Flying Fortress

rRAs for subtidal broad-scale habitats:

6 Goodwin Knoll
10 Dolphin Head
14 Wight-Barfleur
18 St Catherine's Point West

Legend

- rRA accepted by RSG
- rRA accepted but not supported by RSG
- 6nm limit
- 12nm limit
- Balanced Seas

2.2 Contribution of existing MPAs to ENG targets

Natural England and the JNCC have assessed the contribution of SACs, pSACs, SPAs and SSSIs towards the ENG broad-scale habitat and FOCI targets of representativity, replication and adequacy. This assessment is referred to as the 'gap analysis' and a document describing these results in full has been given to stakeholders.

The gap analysis includes:

- All SPAs that are considered to contribute towards the protection of broad-scale habitats/FOCI;
- All SSSIs that are considered to contribute towards the protection of broad-scale habitats/FOCI;
- All SACs (including dSACs and pSACs) that are considered to contribute towards the protection of broad-scale habitats/FOCI.

N.B. for all sites, the extent of the protected habitat is used for calculations rather than the site boundary.

In order to contribute to the protection of an ENG feature, the existing protected area must have the ENG feature as a conservation objective.

Tables 1, 2, and 3 summarise the contribution of existing MPAs towards broad-scale habitats, species FOCI and habitat FOCI targets, where the features occur in the Balanced Seas region. Section 2.3 includes these summary MPA statistics in the appropriate section describing the progress of the developing network towards all ENG targets.

Table 1. Summary of contribution of existing protected areas to ENG broad-scale habitat targets

Broad-scale Habitats		*Total in area (km²)*	*Amount in existing MPAs (km²)*	*ENG target %*	*ENG target (km²)*	*Replicates in existing MPAs*
A1.1	High energy intertidal rock	0.614	0.2574	21 - 38	0.1289 - 0.2333	1
A1.2	Moderate energy intertidal rock	6.116	4.6712	21 - 38	1.2844 - 2.3241	5
A1.3	Low energy intertidal rock	2.0096	0.0785	22 - 39	0.4421 - 0.7837	1
A2.1	Intertidal coarse sediments	3.1628	1.682	25 - 42	0.79069 - 1.3284	3
A2.2	Intertidal sand /muddy sand	43.6398	17.082	25 - 42	10.9126 - 18.3332	4
A2.3	Intertidal mud	317.1219	285.0418	25 - 42	79.3023 - 133.2279	30
A2.4	Intertidal mixed sediments	8.0607	6.546	25 - 42	2.0157 - 3.3863	1
A2.5	Coastal saltmarshes/saline reedbeds†	19.178598	19.0202	NA	NA	28
A2.6	Intertidal sediments/aquatic angiosperms†	1.203233	1.2025	NA	NA	7
A2.7	Intertidal biogenic reefs†	0.104867	0.0361	NA	NA	0
A3.1	High energy infralittoral rock	59.5239	14.7268	15 - 31	8.9286 - 18.4524	2
A3.2	Moderate energy infralittoral rock	197.6088	19.1308	17 - 32	33.5935 - 63.2348	3
A3.3	Low energy infralittoral rock	13.1337	11.8123	16 - 32	2.1014 - 4.2028	1
A4.1	High energy circalittoral rock	1311.6416	823.62	11 - 25	144.2806 - 327.9104	1
A4.2	Moderate energy circalittoral rock	529.2817	5.30	13 - 28	68.8066 - 148.1989	2
A4.3	Low energy circalittoral rock	0.3392	0.00	16 - 32	0.0543 - 0.1085	0
A5.1	Subtidal coarse sediment	2155.1804	3.2444	17 - 32	373.3385 - 702.7548	5
A5.2	Subtidal sand	6025.3653	567.6079	15 - 30	903.8498 - 1807.6995	4
A5.3	Subtidal mud	293.0277	60.4999	15 - 30	37.7549 - 75.5098	1
A5.4	Subtidal mixed sediments	7406.9328	267.2744	16 - 32	1185.1092 - 2370.2185	5
A5.5	Subtidal macrophyte-dominated sediment†	0.011529	0.0114	NA	NA	1
A5.6	Subtidal biogenic reefs†	15.863421	0.0195	NA	NA	0

† The adequacy principle will be followed for these broad-scale habitats by meeting the replication, viability and connectivity targets for their component habitats (see Table 4 below).

Table 2. Summary of contribution of existing protected areas to ENG habitat FOCI targets

Habitat FOCI	No. of replicates	ENG Target
Blue mussel beds**	1	3 - 5
Coastal saltmarsh**	17	n/a
Estuarine rocky habitats	1	3 - 5
Fragile sponge & anthozoan communities	1	3 - 5
Honeycomb worm (*Sabellaria alveolata*) reef**	0	3 - 5
Intertidal underboulder communities	1	3 - 5
Littoral chalk communities	4	3 - 5
Mud habitats in deep water	0	3 - 5
Native oyster beds	0	3 - 5
Peat and clay exposures	1	3 - 5
Rossworm (*Sabellaria spinulosa*) reef**	1	3 - 5
Seagrass beds**	16	3 - 5
Sea-pens & burrowing megafauna	1	3 - 5
Sheltered muddy gravels	2	3 - 5
Subtidal chalk	2	3 - 5
Subtidal sands and gravels	4	3 - 5
Tide-swept channels*	1	3 - 5

* These habitats have been included in the gap analysis as they are protected within existing protected areas but there is no existing data in the Balanced Seas region to demonstrate their presence.

** Meeting replication, viability and connectivity targets for these habitats will fulfil the ENG guidance for broad-scale habitats A2.5, A2.6, A2.7, A5.5, A5.6 (see **Table 2** above).

Table 3. Summary of contribution of existing protected areas to ENG species FOCI targets

Species FOCI	No. of replicates	ENG Target
Tentacled Lagoon Worm (*Alkmaria romijni*)‡	1	3 - 5
Defolin's Lagoon Snail (*Caecum armoricum*)‡	0[8]	3 - 5
Lagoon Sand Shrimp (*Gammarus insensibilis*)‡	1	3 - 5
Stalked Jellyfish (*Haliclystus auricula*)	0	3 - 5
Long-snouted seahorse (*Hippocampus guttulatus*)	0	3 - 5
Short-snouted seahorse (*Hippocampus hippocampus*)	0	3 - 5
Stalked Jellyfish (*Lucernariopsis campanulata*)	0	3 - 5
Stalked Jellyfish (*Lucernariopsis cruxmelitensis*)	0	3 - 5
Starlet Sea Anemone (*Nematostella vectensis*)	4	3 - 5
Native Oyster (*Ostrea edulis*)	0	3 - 5
Peacock's Tail (*Padina pavonica*)	0	3 - 5
Sea Snail (*Paludinella littorina*)	0	3 - 5
Common Maerl (*Phymatolithon calcareum*)	0	3 - 5
Lagoon Sea Slug (*Tenellia adspersa*)‡	0	3 - 5
Lagoon sandworm (*Armandia cirrhosa*)	1	3 - 5

‡ These are lagoonal species of conservation importance which may be afforded protection through coastal saline lagoons designated as SACs.

[8] This has been changed from the original gap table, as the species was inaccurately considered to be protected in Pagham Harbour SSSI

2.3 MPA network progress towards ENG targets

This section presents the summary statistics, graphs, key outcomes and any missed targets for each ENG target to show the extent to which the MPA network (i.e. existing MPAs and recommended MCZs) meets the ENG targets.

a. Broad-scale habitats

The graph in Figure 3 below shows the proportion of each broad-scale habitat captured by MPAs and rMCZs in the network in order to meet the ENG **adequacy** targets, as marked by the dotted lines. Red bars indicate how Network Option 1 (with the smaller rMCZ 29.2) meets the targets and the green bars indicate the proportion captured by rMCZ 29 for Network Option 2. Adequacy targets have been met for all broad-scale habitats found in the Balanced Seas region using both Network Option 1 & 2.

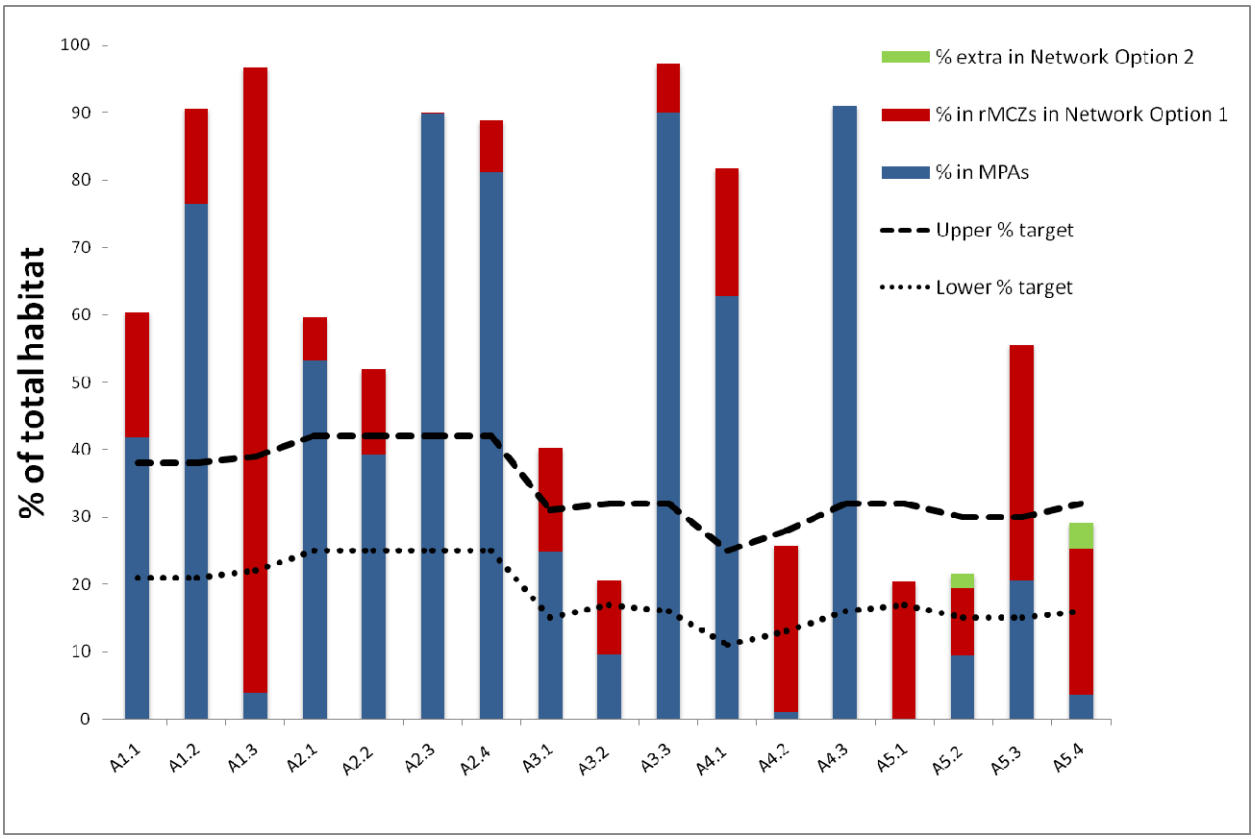


Figure 3. MPA and rMCZ contributions to broad-scale habitat adequacy targets

Table 4 presents the summary statistics for all the broad-scale habitat targets, detailing:

- the **areas and proportions** of each broad-scale habitat protected within MPAs and rMCZs
- the number of **replicate** examples of each habitat within MPAs and rMCZs
- the **biogeographic representativity** of each broad-scale habitat i.e. whether each broad-scale habitat is protected within sites in both Regional Seas (Eastern English Channel and Southern North Sea)

Two values have been provided for habitats that occur in both rMCZ 29 and rMCZ 29.2, showing how each of the network options contribute to the broad-scale habitat targets. Only those features that are on the list of conservation objectives for a site are included in any of these calculations. In the tables, cells highlighted in grey indicate where targets have been met.

Table 4. Summary statistics describing how MPAs and rMCZs contribute to the broad-scale habitat targets (grey cells show targets that have been met)

Broad-scale Habitats			Adequacy targets						Replication targets (ENG min target = 2)			Biogeographic representativity	
			Total in the region (km²)	In MPAs (km²)	in rMCZ (km²)	% met in MPAs & rMCZs	% in all sites	ENG target (km²)	in MPAs	in rMCZs	MPAs & rMCZs	Regional Seas	
												EEC	SNS
A1.1	High energy intertidal rock		0.614	0.2574	0.1135	60.41	60.41	(21 - 38%) 0.1289 - 0.2333	1	2	**3**	Yes	Yes
A1.2	Moderate energy intertidal rock		6.116	4.6712	0.8719	90.63	90.63	(21 - 38%) 1.2844 - 2.3241	2	4	**6**	Yes	Yes
A1.3	Low energy intertidal rock		2.0096	0.0785	1.8630	96.61	96.61	(22 - 39%) 0.4421 - 0.7837	1	5	**6**	Yes	Yes
A2.1	Intertidal coarse sediments		3.1628	1.682	0.2036	59.62	59.62	(25 - 42%) 0.79069 - 1.3284	2	4	**6**	Yes	Yes
A2.2	Intertidal sand /muddy sand		43.6398	17.082	5.5583	51.87	51.87	(25 - 42%) 10.9126 - 18.3332	2	3	**5**	Yes	Yes
A2.3	Intertidal mud		317.1219	285.0418	0.0219	89.87	89.87	(25 - 42%) 79.3023 - 133.2279	2	1	**3**	Yes	Yes
A2.4	Intertidal mixed sediments		8.0607	6.546	0.6201	88.88	88.88	(25 - 42%) 2.0157 - 3.3863	1	5	**6**	Yes	Yes
A3.1	High energy infralittoral rock		59.5239	14.7268	9.2557	40.29	40.29	(15 - 31%) 8.9286 - 18.4524	2	4	**6**	Yes	Yes
A3.2	Moderate energy infralittoral rock		197.6088	19.1308	21.7231	20.67	20.67	(17 - 32%) 33.5935 - 63.2348	2	6	**8**	Yes	Yes
A3.3	Low energy infralittoral rock		13.1337	11.8123	0.9605	97.25	97.25	(16 - 32%) 2.1014 - 4.2028	1	1	**2**	Yes	Yes
A4.1	High energy circalittoral rock		1311.6416	823.62	248.5329	81.74	81.74	(11 - 25%) 144.2806 - 327.9104	1	2	**3**	Yes	Yes
A4.2	Moderate energy circalittoral rock		529.2817	5.30	130.7181	25.70	25.70	(13 - 28%) 68.8066 - 148.1989	2	6	**8**	Yes	Yes
A4.3	Low energy circalittoral rock		0.3392	0.00	0.0000	0.00	0.00	(16 - 32%) 0.0543 - 0.1085	1	0	**1 (max)**	Yes	n/a
A5.1	Subtidal coarse sediment		2155.1804	3.2444	434.5634	19.94	19.94	(17 - 32%) 373.3385 - 702.7548	2	14	**16**	Yes	Yes
A5.2	Subtidal sand	rMCZ 29.2 (Network Option 1)	6025.3653	567.6079	602.8801	19.43	19.43	(15 - 30%) 903.8498 - 1807.6995	2	16	**18**	Yes	Yes
		rMCZ 29 (Network option 2)	6025.3653	567.6079	672.5762	20.58	20.58		2	16	**18**	*Yes*	*Yes*
A5.3	Subtidal mud		293.0277	60.4999	102.3929	64.72	64.72	(15 - 30%) 37.7549 - 75.5098	1	7	**8**	Yes	Yes
A5.4	Subtidal mixed sediments	rMCZ 29.2 (Network Option 1)	7406.9328	267.2744	1607.6326	25.31	25.31	(16 - 32%) 1185.1092 - 2370.2185	2	15	**17**	Yes	Yes
		rMCZ 29 (Network option 2)	7406.9328	267.2744	1744.1995	27.16	27.16		2	15	**17**	*Yes*	*Yes*

For five broad scale habitats found in the Balanced Seas region, it was not possible to calculate the amount of habitat that would be adequate to protect due to a lack of information about them. Therefore their adequacy targets are to be met through the replication, viability and connectivity principles of their component habitats. Table 5 shows that the **replication** targets have been met for all these habitats and explains how this has been achieved. Viability and connectivity targets have been met at the site level.

Table 5. Progress towards targets for broad-scale habitats without adequacy proportions

Broad-scale habitat	Target met?	Component habitats	Replication
A2.5 coastal saltmarshes and saline reedbeds	**YES**	Coastal Saltmarsh	Coastal Saltmarsh not a FOCI. Targets met by existing MPAs (replication n= 12)
A2.6 Intertidal sediments (aquatic angiosperms)	**YES**	Seagrass beds (intertidal)	Replication target met (n = 21). No sub-/intertidal distinction.
A2.7 Intertidal biogenic reefs	**YES**	Honeycomb worm reef (intertidal)	Single intertidal record captured in rMCZ
		Blue mussel beds	Replication target met (n = 10).
A5.5 subtidal macrophyte-dominated sediment	**YES**	Maerl beds	Single regional records captured (n = 1)
		Seagrass beds (subtidal)	Replication target met (n = 21). No sub-/intertidal distinction.
A5.6 subtidal biogenic reefs	**YES**	Honeycomb worm reef (subtidal)	Single subtidal record captured in rMCZ
		Rossworm reef	Replication target met (min n = 13)
		Horse mussel beds	No distribution in project area
		Blue mussel beds	Replication target met (n = 10).
		Cold-water coral reefs	No distribution in project area

KEY OUTCOMES**:**

Adequacy targets have been met for all broad-scale habitats found in the Balanced Seas region in both Network Options 1 & 2, including those broad-scale habitat targets to be met through their component habitats.

Replication targets have been met for all broad-scale habitats in both Network Option 1 & 2 where it was possible to do so (A4.3 has such a limited distribution that it could not be captured in a second site).

Biogeographic representativity (i.e. protection in both the Southern North Sea and the Eastern English Channel Regional Seas) has been met for all broad-scale habitats in both Network Options 1 & 2.

b. Habitat Features of Conservation Importance (FOCI)

Figure 4 shows the number of replicates that have been captured as conservation objectives in MPAs or rMCZs. ENG targets (at least 3-5 replicates, where the distribution allows) are marked by the dotted lines. Grey arrows indicate where replicates are the maximum achievable according to the distribution of these features in the region.

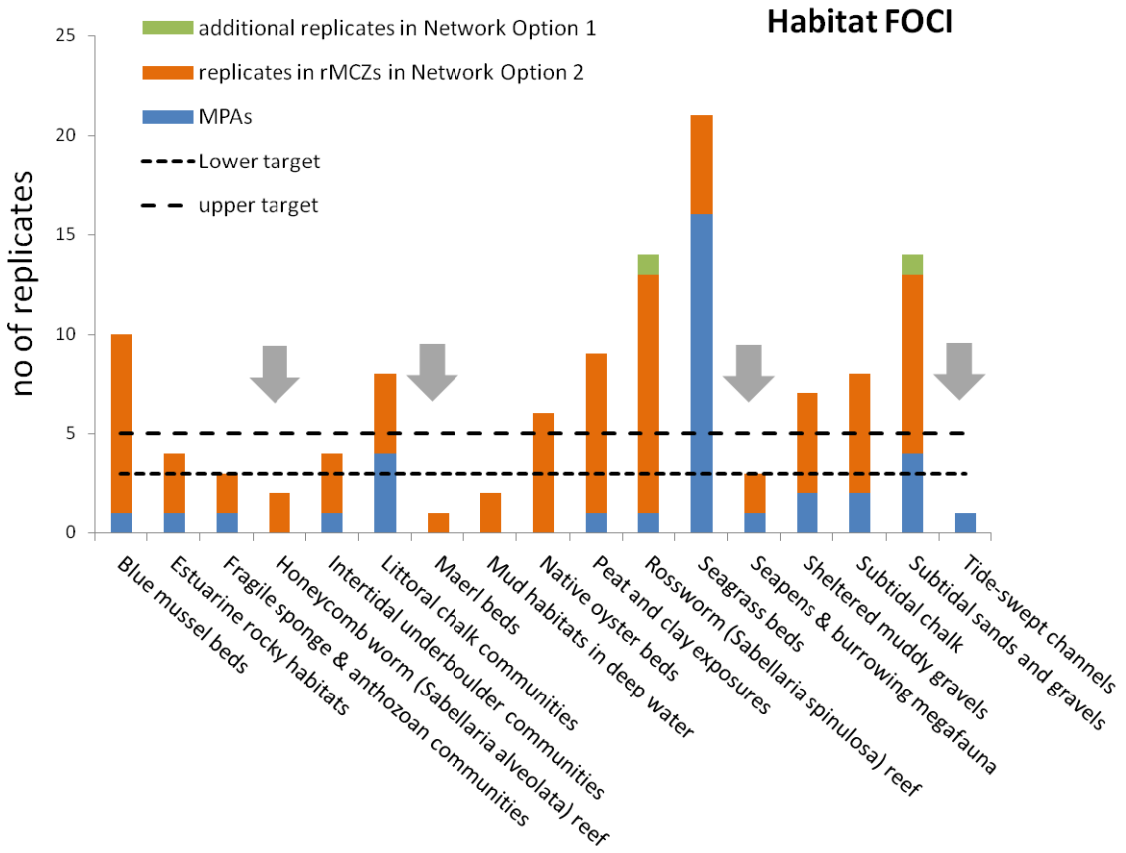


Figure 4. MPA and rMCZ contributions to replication targets for habitat FOCI (grey arrows indicate that the replicates shown are the maximum possible in the region)

Table 6 presents the summary statistics outlining the number of point records and the area captured by MPAs and rMCZs, as well as the number of replicates. Cells in grey indicate where targets are met.

KEY OUTCOMES:
Where the habitat distribution allows, **replication targets** have been met for 16 out of 17 habitat FOCI. Where there are not 3 replicates of a habitat, the maximum number of replicates has been captured in the network.

MISSED TARGETS:
The FOCI 'Mud habitats in deep water' has not been met in the recommendations, as there is considerable uncertainty surrounding the description of the habitat and therefore the validity of the records. The BAP definition refers to a threshold depth of 20m but many stakeholders feel that the distribution of these data points simply does not accord with the relevant depth, or their knowledge of the seabed. JNCC consider the habitat energy levels to be more appropriate in defining these habitats, but no work has yet been done to correlate the Balanced Seas data points with the energy level data to validate each point in turn. Without detailed biological verification of each record, the RSG were unwilling to progress with meeting the targets for this particular habitat.

Table 6. Summary statistics describing how MPAs and rMCZs meet the replication targets for habitat FOCI. Grey shading indicates where targets have been met. *Habitat data are held as point or polygon records or both. Where a habitat is expressed in one format only, the proportion of total points or polygons protected has been calculated. When both types of record are held for the same habitat, the point records have been buffered (to 25m), creating polygons that can be merged with existing polygon data to enable a single habitat area to be calculated. For this reason, areas should be indicative only.*

Habitat		***No of point records***		***Area (km^2) in...***		***Replicates in...***		
		Region	***rMCZ***	***Region***	***rMCZs***	***MPAs***	***rMCZs***	***MPAs/ rMCZs***
Blue mussel beds		-	-	0.85	0.83 (97 %)	1	9	10
Estuarine rocky habitats		-	-	0.35	0.19 (53 %)	1	3	4
Fragile sponge & anthozoan communities		4	4 (100 %)	-	-	1	2	3
Honeycomb worm (*Sabellaria alveolata*) reef				0.019	0.018 (98%)	0	2	2 (max)
Intertidal underboulder communities		6	6 (100 %)	-	-	1	3	4
Littoral chalk communities		-	-	3.75	3.14 (84 %)	4	4	8
Maerl beds		1	1 (100 %)			0	1	1 (max)
Mud habitats in deep water		87	80 (92 %)	-	-	0	2	2
Native oyster beds		186	23 (12 %)	0.59	0.59 (100%)	0	6	6
Peat and clay exposures		-	-	0.93	0.76 (82%)	1	8	9
Rossworm *(Sabellaria spinulosa)* reef	Network Option 1 (rMCZ 29.2)	-	-	0.53	0.47(88 %)	1	12	13
	Network Option 2 (rMCZ 29)	-	-	0.53	0.47(88%)	1	13	14
Seagrass beds		11,939	11,001 (92 %)	0.70	0.58 (83%)	16	5	21
Seapens & burrowing megafauna		33	29 (88%)	-	-	1	2	3
Sheltered muddy gravels		168	61 (36%)	-	-	2	5	7
Subtidal chalk		-	-	11.00	9.16 (83%)	2	6	8
Subtidal sands and gravels	Network Option 1 (rMCZ 29.2)	-	-	7131.34	1043.60 (15%)	4	10	14
	Network Option 2 (rMCZ 29)	-	-	7131.34	1249.87 (18%)	4	10	14

c. Low mobility Species Features of Conservation Importance (FOCI)

Figure 5 shows the number of species FOCI replicates captured as conservation objectives in MPAs and rMCZs , and demonstrates where the ENG targets have been met. Both Network Option 1 & 2 contribute equally to this target. Grey arrows indicate where replicates are the maximum achievable according to the distribution of these features in the region.

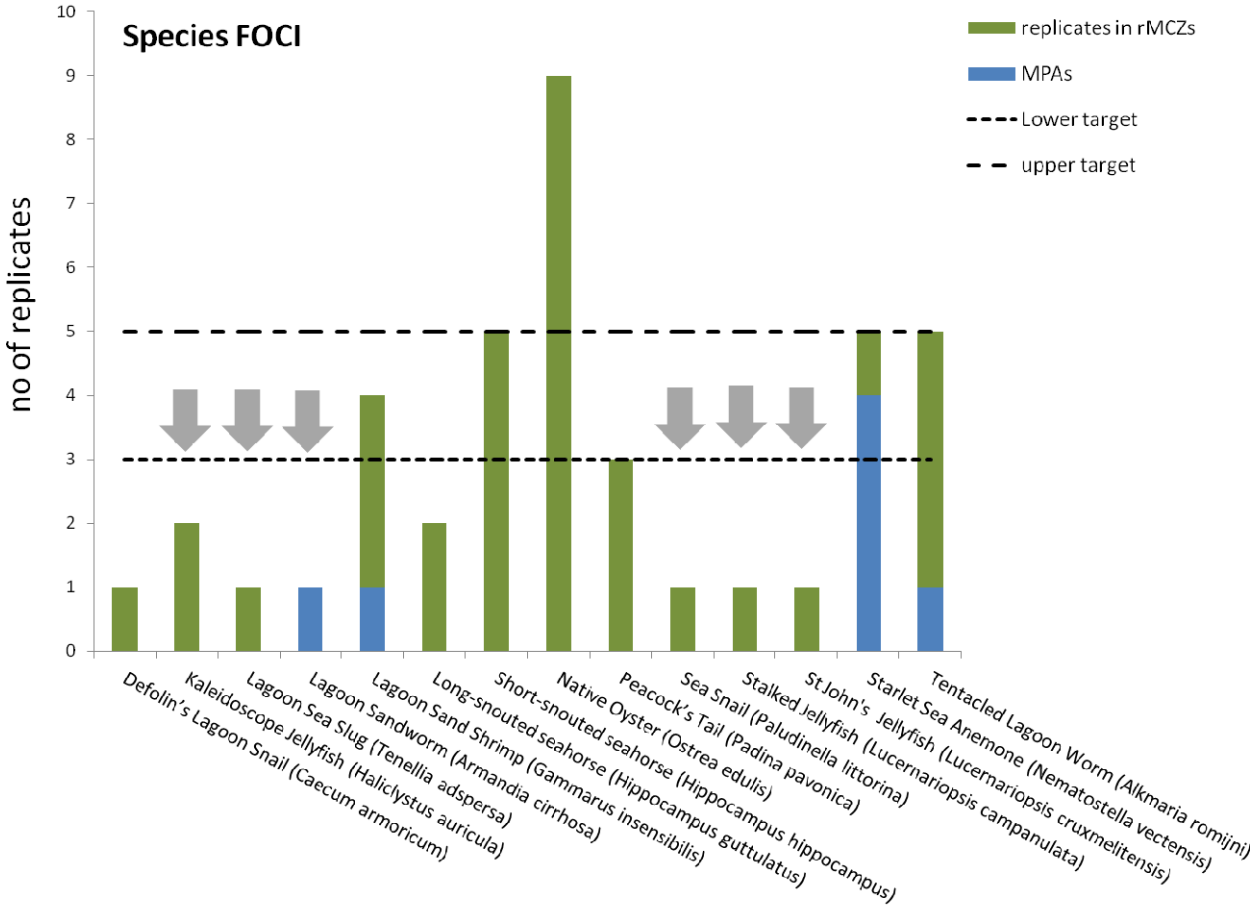


Figure 5. Contribution of MPAs and rMCZs to replication targets (dotted lines) for low mobility species FOCI (grey arrows indicate that the replicates shown are the maximum possible in the region).

Table 7 presents the summary statistics for species FOCI, outlining the number of point records and the area captured by MPAs and rMCZs, as well as the number of replicates. In the table, cells in grey show where targets have been met.

KEY OUTCOMES:

Replication targets have been met for 12 out of the 14 species FOCI. Where there are not 3 replicates of a species, the maximum number of replicates have been captured in the network. Peacock's Tail (*Padina pavonica*) populations in Bembridge Ledges and south Sandown Bay both fall within rMCZ 22 Bembridge, but are considered by the RSG as ecologically separate and therefore meriting individual replicate status. The RSG recognise that the SAP advise that this should be considered as a single replicate, which would mean that the total number of replicates is below the minimum value, but considered their approach to be preferable to protecting the only alternative location in an rMCZ (a

restricted, poor quality population in Freshwater Bay very heavily visited site by tourists and unsupported by stakeholders).

MISSED TARGETS:
Defolin's Lagoon Snail (*Caecum armoricum)* is found in only two locations in the project region: Pagham Harbour (where it is a feature for protection) and the Lydd Firing Ranges, where it is found above Mean High Water. The Lydd area has been considered as unsuitable for an MCZ due to its more terrestrial location and the absence of any other ENG features. Natural England has also noted that a recent site survey did not record the presence of the species (Balanced Seas RSG Meeting 10, July 2011).

Seahorse records: discussions surrounding both Short-snouted and Long-snouted seahorses (*Hippocampus hippocampus, H. guttulatus)* have concluded that it is extremely difficult to confidently confirm stable populations of these species and that they are sufficiently cryptic to mean an absence of records in a site does not prove they are not present. Rather than force the recommendation of MCZs around potentially erroneous or serendipitous records, the RSG has suggested that seahorses are listed as protected features where there are areas of suitable habitat in a site and there has been a species recorded nearby. Therefore, there may be circumstances where no data records occur in a site with a conservation objective against seahorses. It also means that insufficient replicates have been identified for Long-snouted Seahorses, despite there being nine records in the region.

Table 7. Summary statistics showing low mobility species FOCI replications within MPAs and rMCZs.

	No. of points		Replicates in...		
Species FOCI	**Region**	**rMCZ**	**MPAs**	**rMCZs**	**MPAs/rMCZs**
Defolin's Lagoon Snail (*Caecum armoricum*)	3	1	0	1	1
Lagoon Sand Shrimp (*Gammarus insensibilis*)	26	5	1	3**	4
Lagoon Sandworm (*Armandia cirrhosa*)	0	0	1*	0	1(max)
Lagoon Sea Slug (*Tenellia adspersa*)	2	2	0	1	1 (max)
Long-snouted seahorse (*Hippocampus guttulatus*)	9	2	0	2	2
Native Oyster (*Ostrea edulis*)	434	78	0	10	10
Peacock's Tail (*Padina pavonica*)	115	99	0	3***	3
Sea Snail (*Paludinella littorina*)	3	0	0	1**	1 (max)
Short-snouted seahorse (*Hippocampus hippocampus*)	29	9	0	5*	5
Kaleidoscope Jellyfish (*Haliclystus auricula*)	4	4	0	2	2 (max)
Stalked Jellyfish (*Lucernariopsis campanulata*)	1	1	0	1	1 (max)
St John's Jellyfish (*Lucernariopsis cruxmelitensis*)	1	1	0	1	1 (max)
Starlet Sea Anemone (*Nematostella vectensis*)	16	0	4	1**	4
Tentacled Lagoon Worm (*Alkmaria romijni*)	71	57	1	4	5

*One of these replicates includes a site for which there is no supporting data (see text below)
**One of these replicates includes a site where the feature occurs above MHW mark (see text below)
*** Two populations occur within a single site but have been considered as sufficiently ecologically separated to merit two replicates

d. Viability of rMCZs

Table 8 gives the minimum dimensions of each rMCZ, as calculated by the MPA Reporting Tool, and shows whether it meets the ENG viability principle. Using this tool to perform these calculations demonstrated that complex geometrical shapes (such as those found in estuarine sites) affect the Tool's ability to calculate accurate dimension measurements, so these figures should be interpreted with caution. Where features are considered to be ecologically 'bounded' by the coastline, estuary banks or harbour limits, we have noted these characteristics and considered these sites to be viable, marking the Yes with an asterisk, even if they do not meet the minimum dimension.

KEY OUTCOMES:
Although several sites are less than 5km in their minimum dimension, the **viability targets** are considered to be met in 27 of the 29 sites, with 9 sites that are naturally bounded by the coastline, 5 sites that are naturally restricted as estuaries, 3 sites that are natural harbours, 1 site that is an extension to a much larger pSAC, and 1 site that has the minimum viable patch size of the FOCI habitat it is protecting. The remaining 8 sites are larger than 5km in their minimum dimension.

MISSED TARGETS:
Draft MCZ 16 Kingmere and rMCZ 22 Bembridge are approximately 4.2km and 4.75km (respectively) in their minimum dimensions. The boundaries of Kingmere rMCZ 16 have been drawn, with support from local stakeholders and Sussex IFCA, to adequately protect the Black Bream nesting habitat, whilst minimising the impact on the various stakeholder communities. The Sussex IFCA will be best placed to host discussions relating to the viability of the site and any suggestions to enlarge it. Bembridge rMCZ 22 extends considerably seawards (9.8 km)at its maximum dimension to capture specific sediment habitats, but because the site is bounded by the Isle of Wight and its boundaries follow the line of an existing MPA, its minimum dimensions do not meet the viability criteria

Table 8. Minimum dimensions of rMCZs and viability assessment

NAME	Long Name	Minimum Dimension (km2)	Viability	Notes
02	Stour and Orwell Estuaries	3.44	Yes*	Site contains estuaries
03	Blackwater, Crouch, Roach & Colne Estuaries	Na	Yes*	Site contains estuaries
05	Thames Estuary	10.7	Yes*	Site contains estuaries
06	Medway Estuary	5.91	Yes	Site contains estuaries
07	Thanet Coast	2.07	Yes*	Coastal features
08	Goodwin Sands	15.68	Yes	
09	Offshore Foreland	7.92	Yes	
10	Swale Estuary	2.57	Yes*	Site contains estuaries
11.1	Dover to Deal	1.03	Yes*	Coastal features
11.2	Dover to Folkestone	3.14	Yes*	Coastal features
11.4	Folkestone Pomerania	5.47	Yes	Coastal features
13.1	Beachy Head East	11.14	Yes	
13.2	Beachy Head West	0.84	Yes*	Coastal features
14	Offshore Brighton	19.45	Yes	
16	Kingmere	4.2	No	
17	Offshore Overfalls	20	Yes	
19	Norris to Ryde	2.87	Yes*	Coastal/estuarine features
20	The Needles	1.73	Yes*	Coastal/estuarine features
21	Wight-Barfleur Extension	4.1	Yes*	Site adjacent to large existing MPA
22	Bembridge	4.75	No	
23	Yarmouth to Cowes	4.09	Yes*	Coastal/estuarine features
24.2	Fareham Creek	0.7	Yes*	Site contains estuaries
25.1	Pagham Harbour	1.25	Yes*	Natural harbour
25.2	Selsey Bill and the Hounds	2.5	Yes*	Coastal features
26	Hythe Bay	5.12	Yes	
28	Utopia	1.08	Yes*	For FOCI (min viable patch size)
29	East Meridian	10.42	Yes	
29.2	East Meridian (Eastern side)	10.42	Yes	
30	Kentish Knock East	7.7	Yes	
31	Inner Bank	11.4	Yes	

*Denotes where Balanced Seas have changed the viability assessment of the site from that indicated by the minimum dimension, for the reasons stated in the notes.

e. Connectivity

The connectivity principle encourages the selection of sites so that protected EUNIS level 2 habitats will be no more than 40-80km apart. To calculate whether the principle is met, the centre of each EUNIS level 2 (i.e. A1, A2, A3, A4, A5) habitat patch within a site is buffered at distances of 20 and 40km and where these buffers overlap, the habitats are connected by distances of 40 or 80km respectively. To ensure the connectivity principle is met, each habitat must be connected throughout the region, though not necessarily to every other occurrence of the same habitat. Existing protected areas and recommended MCZ have been included within the calculations. In Table 9, connectivity progress has been calculated for the five EUNIS Level 2 habitats occurring in the Balanced Seas region.

Table 9. Assessment of progress towards the connectivity principle.

EUNIS Level 2	Connectivity 40km	Connectivity 80km
A1	No	Yes
A2	No	Yes
A3*	No	No
A4**	Yes	Yes
A5	Yes	Yes

** Connectivity has been met where the distribution of this habitat allows

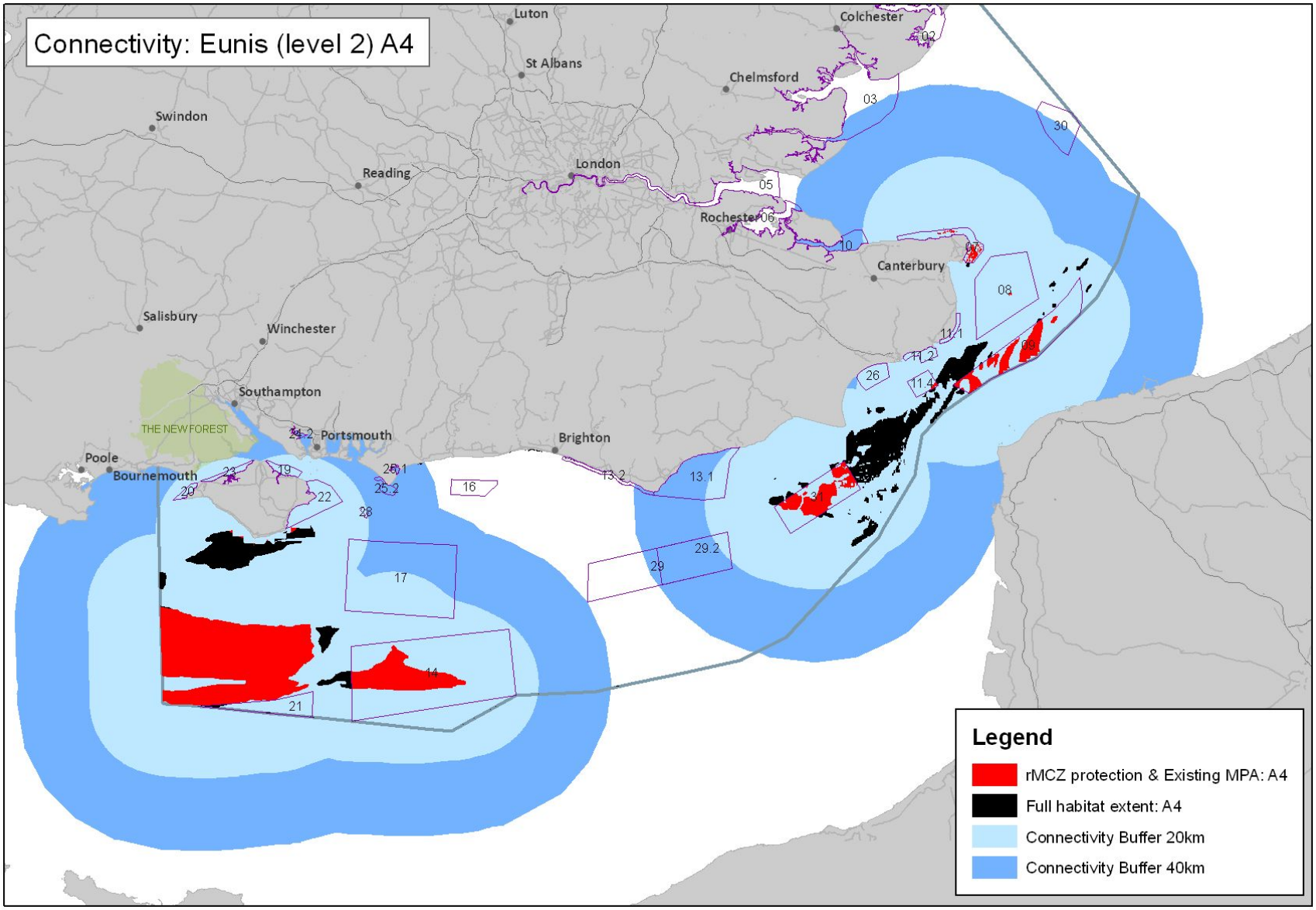
* Connectivity not met due to unrepresentative nature of the mapped habitat

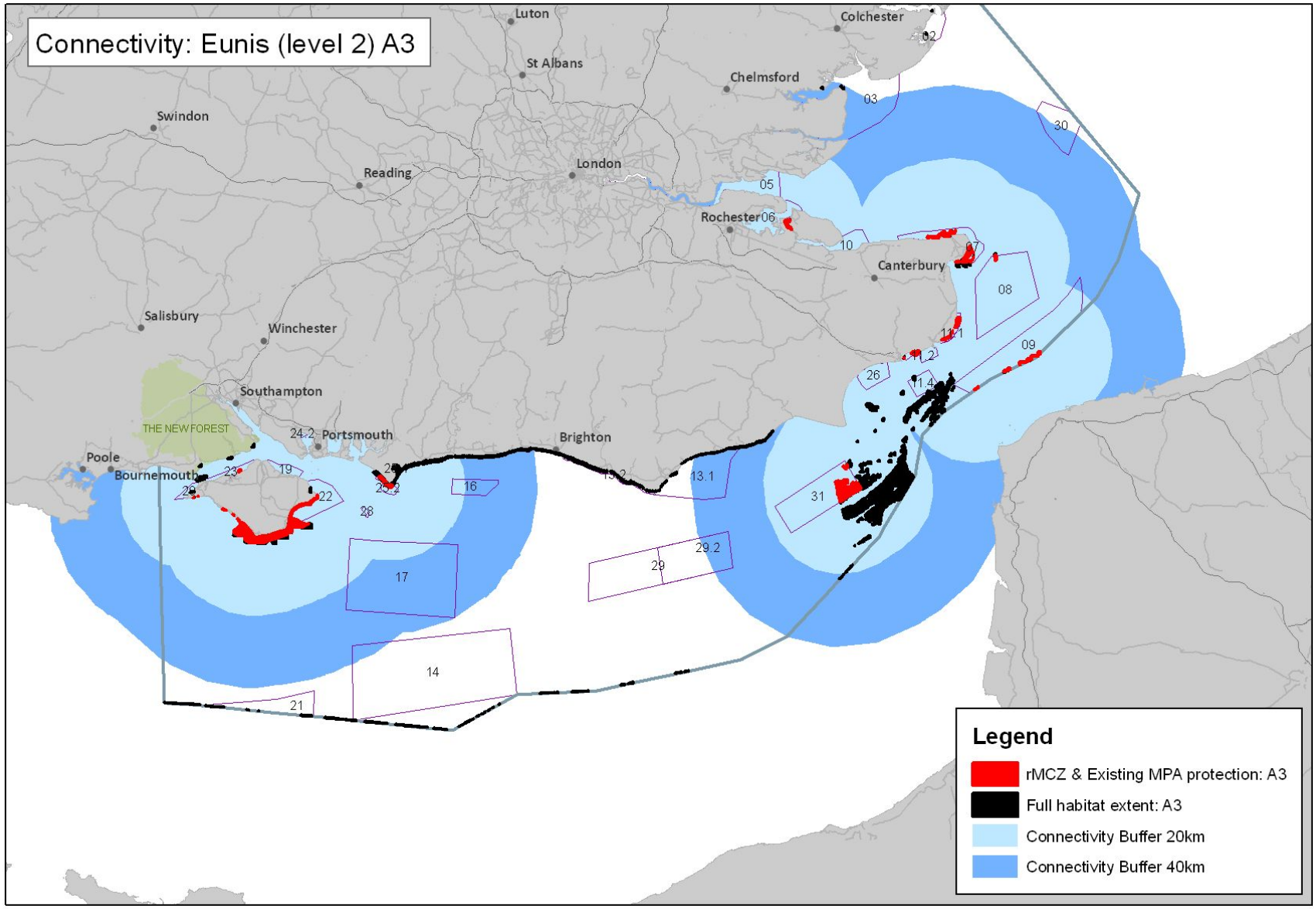
KEY OUTCOMES:

The **connectivity target** is met for four out of the five EUNIS Level 2 habitats. However, it should be noted that A4 (circalittoral rock) habitat is patchily distributed through the Balanced Seas region. From Map 5 (Connectivity EUNIS L2 A4) it is possible to see that, despite being protected by several MPAs, the distribution of the feature makes it impossible to meet the connectivity principle across the region as a whole. However, where the feature's distribution allows, each site protecting the feature is no more than 40-80km apart, thus meeting the connectivity principle.

MISSED TARGETS:

A3 (infralittoral rock) habitat has a limited distribution through the Balanced Seas region, occurring south of the Isle of Wight and through the Dover Straits. Map 5 (Connectivity EUNIS L2 A3) shows that the distribution of A3 habitats appears to run along the Sussex coast close inshore and selection of this for protection within an MCZ would have met the connectivity target. However, this thin coastal band is highly likely to be a result of incorporating the high quality MALSF REC Synthesis study into UKSeaMap/MESH. Due to the reclassification of fine-scale seabed habitats (such as thin veneers of sediment over bedrock) during the REC survey, coarser-scale EUNIS Level 3 habitats that were previously described as rock were reclassified as sediment. Since the REC data survey only extends beyond 1km of the shore, a thin artefact of rock habitat appears where the REC study did not survey and reclassify the habitat as sediment. Given the lower confidence in this inshore infralittoral rock habitat, the RSG did not consider it for protection in the majority of sites along the Sussex coast. Other artefacts of mapping can be seen along the median line, where very thin slivers of the habitat have not been clipped out of the map following the incorporation of the REC data. If these mapping issues are taken into account, it is unlikely that the connectivity principle could be met for A3 infralittoral rock.


Connectivity: Eunis (level 2) A4
Luton
St Albans
Colchester
Chelmsford
Swindon
Reading
London
Rochester
Canterbury
Salisbury
Winchester
Southampton
THE NEW FOREST
Portsmouth
Brighton
Poole
Bournemouth
02
03
30
05
06
10
07
08
11.1
11.2
09
26
11.4
24.2
25.1
25.2
23
19
20
22
28
16
13.2
13.1
31
29.2
29
17
14
21
Legend
rMCZ protection & Existing MPA: A4
Full habitat extent: A4
Connectivity Buffer 20km
Connectivity Buffer 40km


Connectivity: Eunis (level 2) A3
Luton
Colchester
St Albans
Chelmsford
Swindon
Reading
London
Rochester
Canterbury
Salisbury
Winchester
Southampton
THE NEW FOREST
Portsmouth
Brighton
Poole
Bournemouth
02
03
30
05
06
10
07
08
09
11.1
11.2
11.4
26
24.2
23
19
22
28
16
13.2
13.1
31
29.2
29
17
14
21
Legend
rMCZ & Existing MPA protection: A3
Full habitat extent: A3
Connectivity Buffer 20km
Connectivity Buffer 40km

f. Summary table of all features in rMCZs

Table 10. All Features found in rMCZs showing if they are recommended for protection, partially or fully protected under existing designations or not protected.

N.B. Information on the features protected in existing MPAs has been provided by Natural England

Feature name	2	3	5	6	7	8	9	10	11.1	11.2	11.4	13.1	13.2	14	16	17	19	20	21	22	23	24.1	24.2	25.1	25.2	26	27	28	29	29.2	30	31
A1.1 High energy intertidal rock		Y						N				Y						P		N/PP												
A1.2 Moderate energy intertidal rock		N/PP			P			N	Y	Y		P	P					P		N/PP												
A1.3 low energy intertidal rock	Y	P		Y				Y												P	Y											
A2.1 intertidal coarse sediment	N	N/PP			N				Y	Y		Y	Y				N	N		N	N/PP			N	N							
A2.2 Intertidal sand and muddy sand	N	P	Y	Y	N			N		N							P	N		N/PP	P					N						
A2.3 intertidal mud	P	P	N/PP	P	N/PP			P	Y	N							N/PP			N/PP	P		P	P		N						
A2.4 intertidal mixed sediments	Y	Y	Y	Y						N		Y					N	N		N	N/PP				N	N						
A3.1 high energy infralittoral rock					P		Y		Y	Y								N		N/PP					?							
A3.2 mod energy infralittoral rock		N			Y/PP	Y			Y	Y	N							N		P	Y			N								Y
A3.3 low energy infralittoral rock		N			P			Y										P		P												
A4.1 high energy circalittoral rock							Y							Y																		
A4.2 mod energy circalittoral rock		P			Y/PP	Y	Y				Y			Y				P		P												Y
A4.3 Low energy circalittoral rock																																
A5.1 subtidal coarse sediment	Y	N/PP	Y	Y	Y/PP	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y					Y	N		Y		Y			N		N				Y	Y
A5.2 subtidal sand		N/PP	Y	Y	Y/PP	Y	Y	Y			Y	Y	Y			Y	N/PP			Y	P				Y		Y		Y	Y	Y	Y
A5.3 subtidal mud	N	N/PP	Y	Y				Y					Y				Y			Y	N		N	N		Y						
A5.4 subtidal mixed sediments	N	N/PP			Y/PP			Y	Y			Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N/PP	Y	Y	Y	N/PP				Y			N	Y	Y	Y	
A5.5 Subtidal macrophyte-dominated sediment		P															P				P											
A5.6 subtidal biogenic reefs		P																														
Blue mussel beds	**Y**	P		N	Y	Y		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		N																	
Common Maerl (Phymatolithon calcareum)																				Y												
Estuarine rocky habitats	**Y**	P		Y																P	Y											
Fragile sponge & anthozoan communities											Y																Y					
Honeycomb worm (*Sabellaria alveolata*) reef	**Y**										Y																					
Intertidal underboulder communities		P							Y	Y											Y											
Littoral chalk communities					Y/PP				Y	Y		P	Y/PP							P	N											
Mud habitats in deep water																				Y						Y						
Native oyster beds	**Y**	Y														?	N	N		Y	Y		Y		N			N				
Peat and clay exposures	**Y**	N/PP		Y	Y			Y		Y		Y									Y				Y							?
Rossworm (*Sabellaria spinulosa*) reef	**Y**	P	N	N	Y	Y		Y	Y	Y	Y	y	N	Y	N	Y				Y	Y					N			Y			
Seagrass beds	**P**	P	P	P				P									Y/PP	Y		Y/PP	P		P	Y								
Seapens & burrowing megafauna		P																		Y						Y						
Sheltered muddy gravels	**Y**	P	Y	Y				Y								?	P				N/PP		Y									
Subtidal chalk					Y/PP				Y	Y		y	Y		Y			P		P	N						Y					
Subtidal sands and gravels	**Y**	N/PP		N	Y/PP		N	N		Y	Y	N	N	Y	N	Y	P	N	Y	N	P				N		Y	N	?			
Tentacled Lagoon Worm (*Alkmaria romijni*)	P		Y	Y													Y			Y												
Defolin's Lagoon Snail (*Caecum armoricum*)																								Y/PP								
Lagoon Sand Shrimp (*Gammarus insensibilis*)																				Y	Y			Y								
Stalked Jellyfish (*Haliclystus auricula*)																				Y												
Long-snouted seahorse (*Hippocampus guttulatus*)													Y							Y												
Short-snouted seahorse (*Hippocampus hippocampus*)			N							Y		Y	Y							Y					Y							
Stalked Jellyfish (*Lucernariopsis campanulata*)					Y													Y														
Stalked Jellyfish (*Lucernariopsis cruxmelitensis*)					Y																											
Starlet Sea Anemone (*Nematostella vectensis*)	P																			Y	P			N/P								
Native Oyster (*Ostrea edulis*)		Y			N			Y		Y	N	Y	Y		Y	?	N	N		Y	Y		Y	N	N	N	N		N			
Peacock's Tail (*Padina pavonica*)																		Y		Y												?
Sea Snail (*Paludinella littorina*)																				Y												
Common Maerl (*Phymatolithon calcareum*)																																
Lagoon Sea Slug (*Tenellia adspersa*)		Y																														

Key: Y = recommended for protection in MCZ only; **N** = not protected (either by MCZ or existing MPA); **P** = fully protected (across entire MCZ) by existing MPA; **Y/PP** = protected by MCZ and partially protected by MPA; **N/PP** = not protected by MCZ but partially protected by MPA

g. Further considerations (AAEI, highly mobile species, geology)

Using Additional Areas of Ecological Importance (AAEI)

Important areas for the key life cycle stages of species (e.g. spawning/nursery grounds and bird foraging areas) have been given considerable attention in the identification of rMCZs in the Balanced Seas region, in order to maintain ecosystem processes and services. A number of datasets have been provided to the project at various stages:

- Spawning and nursery ground data were received from CEFAS under the national MB102 contract
- RSPB have provided data (preferred EUNIS Level 3 habitat type, seabed depth and/or distance from shore) on selected seabird foraging areas
- Important Plant Areas have been received from Plantlife International.
- European Seabirds at Sea data were obtained from JNCC
- Benthic biodiversity layers (received from MarLIN) showed the species richness, species taxonomic distinctness, species Chao 2 richness, biotope richness and biotope taxonomic distinctness of the region, in grid-square format. The areas of highest richness (richest 10% and richest 25% of the region) were used in the RSG decision making process.
- Benthic diversity grab samples were received from the Environment Agency and were presented as species richness in quartiles.
- Pelagic biodiversity layers (received from MarLIN) showed the persistent thermal fronts in spring, summer, autumn and winter, equating to higher probabilities of species richness.
- Pelagic biodiversity (provided by JNCC), thermal fronts, RSPB bird foraging areas, basking shark aggregation areas, marine mammal sightings data and CEFAS spawning and nursery ground data were combined to produce an index of biodiversity.

Throughout the process, all AAEI datasets were made available at the stakeholder group meetings and were projected onto the screen as required to focus site planning discussions. Stakeholders also used their own knowledge of these areas to guide the selection of site boundaries. The need to identify shortfall ENG targets after the incorporation of the MALSF REC Synthesis study data also provided an opportunity to re-evaluate site locations in relation to additional data such as AAEI. Using all available biodiversity data and incorporating the finer-scale English Channel Synthesis REC Study habitats, as well as taking existing 'Option Areas' and BAIs into consideration, the Project Team undertook some Marxan analysis to determine where the highest quality areas of broad-scale habitats could most appropriately be introduced into the network to meet the ENG targets. This produced a selection of high biodiversity areas where broad-scale habitat targets could be met. These were presented to the RSG for consideration at RSG Meeting 9a[9] and were discussed, modified where considered necessary and agreed as draft MCZs.

Consideration of highly mobile species

CEFAS data layers (DEFRA MB102 2B) identified large grid squares across the UK where mobile species were thought to occur. Given the very coarse-scale nature of this dataset, the RSG chose to use local stakeholder knowledge and regional datasets when selecting these species for protection. Good spatial data for Common Smelt and European Eel were provided by the Environment Agency and these were used, in combination with their advice, to select the Thames Estuary (rMCZ 5) as the best site for protecting both species.

[9] For more detail on the analysis undertaken, the discussions, and a map of the relevant areas, please see the RSG Meeting 9a Report (May 2011)

KEY OUTCOMES:
Spawning and nursery grounds for all three highly mobile species; European Eel, Common Smelt and Undulate Ray, have been protected within the network of rMCZs using Environment Agency information for the two former species, and stakeholder knowledge and information for the latter. This meets the targets set by the ENG.

Consideration of Geology and Geomorphology
Within the Balanced Seas project area there are 9 Geological Conservation Review (GCR) sites and two geomorphological features listed in the ENG for potential incorporation into the MCZ network. During the 3rd iteration, these were included in the assessment of which features should be protected. Advice has been sought from the project's geomorphologist on the appropriateness of an MCZ to protect these features, as well as on their more precise boundaries, though this has proved to be difficult due to the lack of data. In some cases, stakeholders felt additional geological or geomorphological features should be included and these have been listed as features for protection.

KEY OUTCOMES:
Four of nine GCR sites have been included in the network and 1 geomorphological feature. In addition, the Balanced Seas RSG chose to include Bouldnor Cliff which lies within rMCZ 23 Yarmouth to Cowes. Bouldnor Cliff is a recognised geologically important site (Bouldnor and the adjacent Hamstead Cliffs provide a complete succession through the Oligocene age rocks, some 30 million years old, known as the Hamstead Beds, and have rich peat and clay deposits and fossil faunas of mammals, reptiles, birds and insects).

MISSED TARGETS:
Geological and geomorphological features may be considered by the RSG for inclusion in the network but their inclusion or exclusion from any site has no associated targets and there is no specific requirement to include the remaining sites. Warden Point GCR site on the Isle of Sheppey was considered, but there were insufficient additional ENG features to merit the creation of a new MCZ in this area. Pagham Harbour GCR site was not included due to very significant concerns from local stakeholders that this would affect future coastal defence plans.

Table 11 shows where high mobility species FOCI and geological and geomorphological features have been identified as present and appropriate for protection.

Table 11. rMCZs protecting geological features or highly mobile species FOCI in the Balanced Seas region

	rMCZs																													
Geological features	**2**	**3**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**	**11.1**	**11.2**	**11.4**	**13.1**	**13.2**	**14**	**16**	**17**	**19**	**20**	**21**	**22**	**23**	**24.2**	**25.1**	**25.2**	**26**	**28**	**29**	**29.2**	**30**	**31**
Geological Conservation Review (GCR sites)																														
Bognor Reef																														
Bracklesham Bay																								✓						
Clacton Cliffs and Foreshore		✓																												
East Head, Chichester Harbour																														
Felpham																														
Folkestone Warren										✓																				
Lee-on-the-Solent																														
Pagham Harbour																							✓							
Warden Point																														
Geological and Geomorphological features																														
Felpham Palaeocene submerged forest																														
English Channel outburst flood features						✓	✓				0			0		0			✓								**0**		**0**	0
Other geological features																														
Bouldnor Cliff																					✓									
Species FOCI High mobility	**2**	**3**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**	**11**	**11**	**11**	**13**	**13.2**	**14**	**16**	**17**	**19**	**20**	**21**	**22**	**23**	**24**	**25**	**25**	**26**	**28**	**29**		**30**	**31**
European Eel (*Anguilla anguilla*)		✓	✓					✓				✓	✓										✓							
Smelt (*Osmerus eperlanus*)			✓																											
Undulate Ray (*Raja undulata*)																✓														

h. Conservation Objectives

Background to Conservation Objectives

Achieving an ecologically coherent network of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) means that the designated features of each MPA need to achieve an acceptable quality (in biological or geological terms) to ensure they contribute to the network. A conservation objective (CO) is a statement describing the desired quality of each feature (habitat, species, geological or geomorphological formation) in an MCZ. Existing MPAs in the UK use the term *Favourable Condition* to represent the desired state of their features. This term has also been applied to MCZ features in order to promote consistency with existing MPAs as they all contribute to the same MPA network. COs highlight those activities likely to damage the feature and for which management may be required**.**

DEFRA require draft COs to accompany the MCZ recommendations. The draft COs will be refined during the subsequent work that will lead publication of the final COs when MCZs are designated. The draft COs will be reviewed if new evidence is brought forward during the public consultation. The final COs for a site will be determined by Ministers in the designation order.

Due to the sensitivities of habitats and species, some pressures caused by human activities may stop the feature attaining Favourable Condition if present at sufficient intensity. Based on the level of activity and risk (i.e. a vulnerability assessment), the CO is either to **MAINTAIN the feature in favourable condition** (i.e. features are not sensitive to the current type and level of activities taking place at the site and therefore not vulnerable to damage), or **RECOVER the feature to favourable condition** (i.e. features are sensitive to the activities occurring at the site and likely to be vulnerable to damage). The CO will then dictate whether activities can continue largely as they were (with monitoring and if necessary management to ensure there is no increase in intensity/distribution), or will need managing to reduce the pressures on the feature.

It is required that one example of each feature is identified as a Reference Area. These are places in which all extractive, depositional activities are removed and all human-derived disturbing or damaging activities appropriately mitigated to allow all features to **RECOVER the feature to reference condition**, representing its unimpacted condition. Reference condition can serve as a benchmark against which other areas of the marine environment can be compared as part of long term monitoring and assessment.

Process for developing conservation objectives: the Vulnerability Assessment

Determining whether the CO should be to 'MAINTAIN or 'RECOVER' the feature to Favourable Condition requires knowledge of its current status (i.e. favourable or unfavourable condition). A status assessment was undertaken, using either direct evidence if available, or a risk-based 'vulnerability assessment' (VA) approach that assessed the vulnerability of the feature to pressures (from activity information). Vulnerability was determined by assessing the sensitivity of the feature to pressures, and the exposure of the feature to those pressures. In the majority of cases, direct evidence was not available on the condition of the feature and therefore draft COs for the rMCZs were largely derived through a VA. Natural England and the Joint Nature Conservancy Council produced Conservation Objective Guidance[10] to help develop COs.

[10] Conservation Objectives Guidance (JJNCC /NE 2011)

VAs were based primarily on two factors: 1) sensitivity of a feature to a pressure and 2) exposure of activity causing that pressure. Feature sensitivity was informed by the sensitivity matrix[11] collation table produced by ABP Mer on behalf of NE and JNCC. This was compiled by specialists and industry representatives to give an indication of ENG feature sensitivity and an associated measure of confidence in that sensitivity level. Sensitivity of a feature was ranked as Not Sensitive, Low, Moderate or High, Not Assessed or a range of sensitivities. This latter category most often applied to broad-scale habitats, where the component finer-scale habitats sensitivities varied significantly. To determine the features exposure to pressure, NE and JNCC developed a features/pressures matrix (NE/JNCC) that showed what pressures are associated with particular activities. Once the activities causing pressure had been identified, the exposure (i.e. type and level of pressure occurring on a feature) was determined through stakeholder input as discussed below. Exposure to activities that might cause a pressure was ranked as Not Exposed, Exposed or Exposure Unknown. The levels of exposure shown to exist were explained in the detailed text in the Vas.

A combination of sensitivity and exposure gave an indication of vulnerability. If the vulnerability was high to moderate, the feature could be subject to significant impacts and therefore the CO was set to RECOVER, stating the specific activities causing high vulnerability. A VA was carried out for every feature and every pressure caused by all activities which overlapped or were in close proximity to the feature in an MCZ.

Each feature has only one CO, so if the VA showed one activity exposure to cause high vulnerability, this would mean the CO would be RECOVER, regardless of any other lower vulnerability assessments for other activity exposures. For example, if shipping anchorages caused shallow abrasion/penetration (i.e. damage to seabed surface and penetration ≤25mm) to a feature sensitive to this pressure, the vulnerability would be high and therefore the CO set to RECOVER. Any proposed management would then need to be discussed in relation **directly to the named activity** (i.e. shipping anchorage) rather than in relation to all activities.

Evidence used in the vulnerability assessment

To assess the exposure of activity, various sources of evidence was used. At the first stage, GIS layers showing spatial socio-economic information were used to assess activity levels. These layers consisted of national contract data on activities (e.g. VMS data, inshore fisheries sightings data, cables, aggregate license areas), the specifically designed Fishermap interview information (see Section 1.3) and data sets from individual sectors (e.g. international fishing sectors). Stakeholder information was extremely important in providing up-to-date knowledge on the current levels of activity in an area. Balanced Seas devoted one series of Local Group meetings to obtaining specific information on the overlap (spatial and temporal) between features and activities, and gathered comments from the RSG over several meetings, so stakeholders played a key role in contributing information for the process to determine COs. Once the first draft COs had been identified, Balanced Seas held review workshops with the Marine Management Organisation (MMO), Environment Agency (EA) and Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities (IFCAs) to gain more information on the accuracy of activity levels and discuss the potential measures necessary to manage activities which were suggested as impacting the feature. Natural England also held meetings with individual sectors (e.g. Ports Authorities) to discuss the specific levels of activity occurring.

[11] Tillin, H.M., Hull, S.C., Tyler-Walters, H. 2010. Development of a Sensitivity Matrix (pressures-MCZ/MPA features). Report to the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs from ABPMer, Southampton and the Marine Life Information Network (MarLIN) Plymouth: Marine Biological Association
MB0102 - Report No 22: Task 3. Development of a Sensitivity Matrix (pressures-MCZ/MPA features)

A precautionary approach was taken during the VAs as this was built into the sensitivity matrix relating to features. A pragmatic approach has been taken to exposure. If activity is thought to be so low that it is negligible, the advice from Natural England was to describe the exposure as not exposed. Where possible, the detail of negligible levels or conflicting detail on exposure levels between the stakeholder comments and GIS layers has been captured in the text accompanying the assessments. Information from public and regulatory authorities was sought to validate current exposure levels as much as possible. Exposure levels tend to vary throughout sites based on a number of factors, seasonality being significant. Further, the marine environment can be dynamic and therefore a flexible and adaptive approach is required.

It is important to note that VAs were only carried out for activities known to occur in the MCZ, either from local knowledge or national information. Since the VAs were undertaken, for some sites additional information has become available on activities that occur and that were not known of at the time and so have not been assessed. VAs will therefore need to be made for such activities. In the future, new activities will also need to be assessed as well as changes in activity levels. Monitoring will be key to adaptive management in all MCZs for features that have COs of recover and maintain.

The best available evidence was used at the time of conducting VAs. However, to ensure consistency across all four regional projects, Natural England and JNCC conducted a 'sense check' of the draft COs at a national level in June 2011. This focused on ensuring similar levels of activity exposure and vulnerability had been used across all regional projects, but mitigation measures were also considered. Due to the complexity of the work involved, the VAs for fisheries were not checked during this period, but this work is ongoing and will inform the SNCBs advice to government. A consistent methodology to assess exposure is being developed for inshore fisheries (mainly from Fishermap data) and offshore activity (primarily VMS data), as well as sightings and overflight data. An assessment of cumulative impacts is still to take place nationally. In the future, as more up-to-date data is provided, the VAs will need to be reviewed.

Draft Conservation Objectives

The **summary of COs and potential management measures** for features within rMCZs are presented in each separate rMCZ site report (Section 15). Public Authorities (MMO/IFCAs/EA/NE) and stakeholders (Local Group and RSG members) have provided additional activity information and an indication of support.

The **individual CO sheets** for each separate feature that will be used by the SNCBs are presented in Appendix 1.

The full **Vulnerability Assessments** detailing the evidence used and issues arising in establishing the COs are available in Appendix 4.

All COs associated with rMCZs are currently **draft** and will not be finalised until designation by the Minister.

i. Recommended Reference Areas

One example of each ENG feature must be protected in a Reference Area (RA) in the project area. The Balanced Seas RSG agreed to put forward a total of 25 areas as rRAs. Eight of these were recommended because they are the only place considered feasible to protect a particular feature and are therefore critical to meeting the ENG requirements, but it must be noted that some of these locations are not supported by sectors that use them.

Table 12 shows which features are identified for protection in the 25 rRAs identified by the Balanced Seas RSG. Four rRAs (numbers 6, 10, 14, 18 and coloured grey in the table) have been identified for protection of broad-scale habitat and are at least 5km in their minimum dimension in order to meet the viability targets. The rest are sites identified for FOCI, where the minimum dimension is at least 500m to meet the FOCI-specific minimum viable patch size outlined in the ENG. Cells shaded in green in the table, and containing a figure '1', indicate that the feature would be viably protected at this location; a grey cell with a figure "0" indicates that the feature occurs but the site does not meet the viability guidelines for that feature. Cells shaded in blue and containing a 'D' mean that the site has been selected for that feature, but there is currently no spatial data to verify its presence and evidence is anecdotal only.

KEY OUTCOMES: 25 rRAs have been identified for further consideration which, if they were to be agreed, would protect 42 out of the 45 ENG features in the Balanced Seas region. 22 of the 25 rRAs are of viable size for the features they are specifically trying to protect.

MISSED TARGETS:

Sea Snail (*Paludinella littorina*): Only located above MHW in Bembridge (rMCZ 22) so further investigation will be necessary to verify the records and discuss an appropriate site with local stakeholders.

Long-snouted seahorse (*Hippocampus guttulatus)*: has been a difficult feature to include in reference areas due to uncertainty surrounding its presence. Although records do not show it to be present in the site, Culver Spit rMCZ 21 is thought to be an appropriate reference area for this species.

A5.3 Subtidal mud has a restricted distribution and only two places are possible for a 5 x 5km area: just outside Felixstowe Port and Hythe Bay rMCZ 26. The Felixstowe area was discounted due to its proximity to the busy port area and the fact that it is not within an rMCZ or existing MPA. From the UKSeaMap/MESH data, Hythe Bay appears to be entirely subtidal coarse sediment (A5.1) but regional biotope data and stakeholder consensus have suggested it is likely to be subtidal mud throughout the site. However, the area is very heavily used by the potting, netting and trawling sectors, as well as by anglers, and was not acceptable as a reference area in its entirety. Two alternative suggestions were made to include subtidal mud in areas that were not viable:

Hythe Flats (draft Reference Area 8), within Hythe Bay rMCZ 26, which has been identified as an rRA for 'mud habitats in deep water' and 'sea-pens and burrowing megafauna', has also been suggested as the best alternative reference area for subtidal mud, as the trawling, potting and netting sectors have agreed to cease their activities if the rMCZ is designated.

Holehaven Creek (rRA 3) the entire creek has been suggested by the RSG as an rRA for sheltered muddy gravels, which is much larger than 500m x 500m (required for FOCI features) and thus potentially suitable for a broad-scale habitat RA. Although the broad-scale habitat map does not show the presence of subtidal mud in this area, this habitat is located close by and is likely to occur in the Creek itself. However, there is some uncertainty as to whether this site is acceptable as an RA due to the need to maintain a dredged channel for access, though the exact details and spatial extent of this activity are not known.

Viability- only rRA 4 and rRA 11 are less than the minimum viable patch size for their feature (1km). rRA 20 for the Stalked Jellyfish has no boundary and therefore cannot be considered in the target.

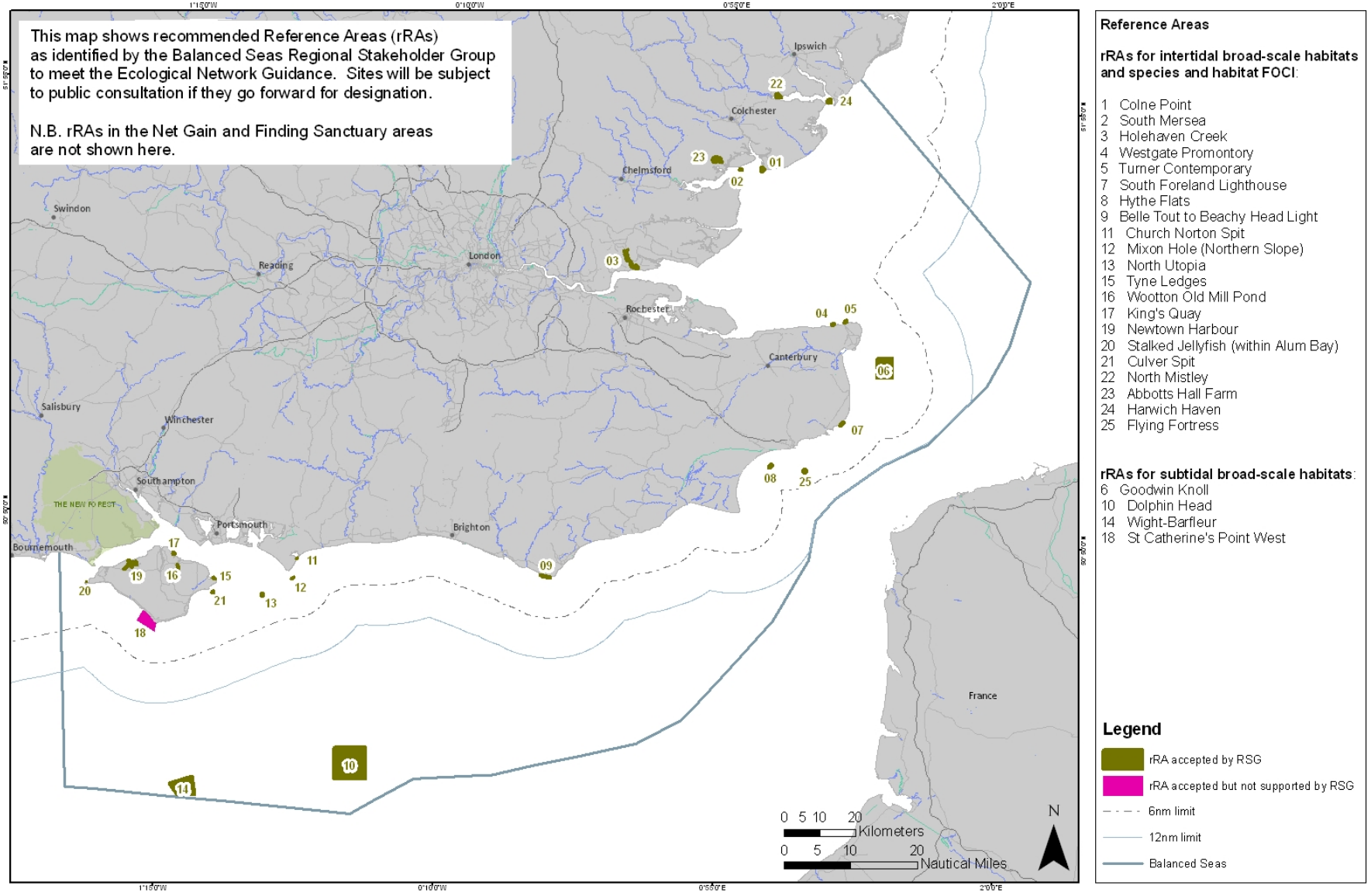
Table 12. Features for protection in draft Reference Areas (1 = present; 0 = present but not in viable site; D = present but no data; ! = lost in recent change to site boundaries)

Type	Feature		1 Colne Point	2 South Mersea	3 Holehaven Creek	4 Westgate Promontory	5 Turner Contemporary	6 Goodwin Knoll	7 South Foreland Lighthouse	8 Hythe Flats	9 Belle Tout to Beachy Head	10 Dolphin Head	11 Church Norton Spit	12 Mixon Hole (North Slopes)	13 North Utopia	14 Wight-Barfleur	15 Tyne Ledges	16 Wootton Old Mill Pond	17 King's Quay	18 St Catherine's Point West	19 Newtown Harbour	20 Stalked Jellyfish (within Alum Bay)	21 Culver Spit	22 North Mistley	23 Abbotts Hall Farm	24 Harwich Haven	25 Flying Fortress
Broad-scale habitats	A1.1 High energy intertidal rock	✓							1																		
	A1.2 Moderate energy intertidal rock	✓				1	1		1		1																
	A1.3 Low energy intertidal rock	✓																								1	
	A2.1 Intertidal coarse sediment	✓																	1		!					1	
	A2.2 Intertidal sand and muddy sand	✓	1		1		1												1								
	A2.3 Intertidal mud	✓	1		1	1	1						1						1		1			1			
	A2.4 Intertidal mixed sediments	✓	1																1								
	A3.1 High energy infralittoral rock	✓							0		0									1							
	A3.2 Moderate energy infralittoral rock	✓				0	0				0		0							1							
	A3.3 Low energy infralittoral rock	✓																		1							
	A4.1 High energy circalittoral rock	✓										1				0				1							
	A4.2 Moderate energy circalittoral rock	✓					0				0	1								1							
	A5.1 Subtidal coarse sediment	✓						1								1											0
	A5.2 Subtidal sand	✓	0			0	0	1			0						0										
	A5.3 Subtidal mud	×	0		0					0									0								
	A5.4 Subtidal mixed sediments	✓	0				0		0		0	1		0	0	0				1	0	0	0				
Habitat FOCI	Blue mussel beds	✓	1																					1			
	Estuarine rocky habitats	✓																			1						
	Intertidal underboulder communities	✓							1																		
	Littoral chalk communities	✓				1	1		1		1																
	Mud habitats in deep water	✓								1																	
	native oyster beds	✓		D																		1					
	Peat and clay exposures	✓												1							!						
	sabellaria spinulosa reef	✓										1														1	1
	sabellaria alveolata reef	✓																								1	1
	Seagrass beds	✓															1		1								
	Seapens & burrowing megafauna	✓								D																	
	Sheltered muddy gravels	✓			1																						
	subtidal chalk	✓					1		1		1										!	0					
	Subtidal sands and gravels	✓				1	1				1	1			1	1				1		0				1	
	Fragile sponge & anthozoan communities	✓													1												
	Maerl beds	✓																					1				
Species FOCI	Stalked Jellyfish (H.auricula)	✓				1																					
	Long-snouted seahorse (H. guttulatus)	×																									
	Short-snouted seahorse (H. hippocampus)	✓																					1				
	Stalked Jellyfish (L. campanulata)	✓																				1					
	Stalked Jellyfish (L. cruxmelitensis)	✓					1																				
	Starlet Sea Anemone (N. vectensis)	✓																						1			
	Peacock's Tail (P.pavonica)	✓															1										
	Sea Snail (P. littorina)	×																									
	Native Oyster (O.edulis)	✓	0														0				!	0					
	Lagoon Sea Slug (T.adspersa)	✓																							1		
	Tentacled Lagoon Worm (A.romijni)	✓																1									
	Defolin's Lagoon Snail (C.armoricum)	✓											1														
	Lagoon Sand Shrimp (G. insensibilis)	✓																			D						

Recommended Reference Areas (rRAs)

Version 1.0
Scale 1:916,223
Projection UTM Zone 31N

BalancedSeas



Reference Areas

rRAs for intertidal broad-scale habitats and species and habitat FOCI:

1 Colne Point
2 South Mersea
3 Holehaven Creek
4 Westgate Promontory
5 Turner Contemporary
7 South Foreland Lighthouse
8 Hythe Flats
9 Belle Tout to Beachy Head Light
11 Church Norton Spit
12 Mixon Hole (Northern Slope)
13 North Utopia
15 Tyne Ledges
16 Wootton Old Mill Pond
17 King's Quay
19 Newtown Harbour
20 Stalked Jellyfish (within Alum Bay)
21 Culver Spit
22 North Mistley
23 Abbotts Hall Farm
24 Harwich Haven
25 Flying Fortress

rRAs for subtidal broad-scale habitats:

6 Goodwin Knoll
10 Dolphin Head
14 Wight-Barfleur
18 St Catherine's Point West

Legend

- rRA accepted by RSG
- rRA accepted but not supported by RSG
- 6nm limit
- 12nm limit
- Balanced Seas

2.4 Sites that were not included in the Final Recommendations

The Balanced Seas final recommendations represents the culmination of extensive network development and site refinement as part of a two-year iterative process of feedback and review by stakeholders. Most initial site suggestions had their boundaries or locations re-adjusted numerous times, or were merged together with other sites, in order to respond to ecological or socio-economic issues raised by the RSG and Local Group members or their wider constituencies.

During the first iteration (the work period culminating in the first Progress Report), Broad Areas of Interest (BAI) were identified by the group, representing general areas that stakeholders felt merited protection or responded to meeting ENG targets but did not have agreed boundaries. Subsequent to the First Progress Report and a review of how the developing network met the ENG, many of these sites were dropped out of the network (e.g. BAI 18; First Progress Report, June 2010).

Local Group stakeholder regularly made suggestions for sites or boundary adjustments and these would then be introduced to the RSG at the next meeting. Details of these suggestions can be found in the various Local Group meeting reports and RSG meetings 3, 6 and 8. Meeting shortfall ENG targets was a focus of various stakeholder meetings, where 'BAI Option Areas' were discussed. The Option Areas were then taken to the Local Group meetings where appropriate, to obtain local stakeholder feedback. One or more of the options would then be selected to go forward as draft MCZs, but these option areas did not constitute fixed boundaries or formal MCZ proposals and were dropped once the best option was identified. Details of Option Areas can be found in the Offshore and Inshore Meeting Reports.

The South-East England Biodiversity Forum SEEBF Marine Sub – Group compiled a list of areas it felt were hugely ecologically important in the southeast region, according to the available evidence (see Appendix 2). These suggested areas were broad and many of these locations have subsequently become rMCZs. This list of proposals was made available to the RSG, but the SEEBF members on the RSG and/or Local Groups were largely responsible for putting the individual site recommendations forward.

For the rMCZs and rRAs, the basic progression of adjustments is described in the site descriptions in the section 'Evolution of the Site', referencing the Balanced Seas meetings where the changes were made. There were a small number of sites where the discussion proceeded for some time, with some sectors in favour of them becoming rMCZs, but for which the RSG did not reach final consensus on putting them forward. These sites are described briefly here and more detailed information can be found in the reports of Balanced Seas stakeholder meetings and the formal Progress Reports submitted to the SAP.

<u>Seven Sisters Voluntary Marine Conservation Area and Cuckmere and Ouse Estuaries</u>

The South Downs National Park Authority and the South Downs Network submitted a joint proposal to adjust the Beachy Head West boundaries further seawards to follow those of the Seven Sisters Voluntary Marine Conservation Area and to extend the site to incorporate the Cuckmere and Ouse Estuaries (see Appendix 3). Further details are captured in the site report for rMCZ 13.2 Beachy Head West.

<u>Deben Estuary</u>

The Deben Estuary was included as a BAI in the first and second iterations, but subsequent evaluation of the contribution of all sites in terms of their ENG features revealed that it only captured two ENG features (sheltered muddy gravels and estuarine rocky habitats), which were already represented elsewhere. The site was removed in RSG meeting 6 (January 2011).

Bassurelle

A BAI was drawn around the Bassurelle Sandbank SAC in order to capture additional subtidal sand habitat (A5.2). However, JNCC advised the RSG that SAC boundaries were specifically set to capture the ecologically ideal extent of the relevant feature (in this case, the sandbank) and that any extension of the site would therefore not be considered to improve on the conservation contribution for that feature in that location. The BAI was therefore dropped from the network in RSG Meeting 8 (April 2011).

Chichester & Langstone Harbours (Bosham & Itchenor Creeks)

In the second iteration, Portsmouth, Chichester and Langstone Harbours were included as a BAI as they were considered important for bird species, lagoonal species and seagrass. Of particular importance was the Lagoon Spire Snail (*Heleobia stagnorum*), the only record of this snail occurring anywhere in the UK, but not an ENG feature. However, the gap analysis revealed that both seagrass and bird species received protection under the existing MPA designations and the site was then considered to contain insufficient ENG features to merit its presence in the network. Subsequently, Chichester Harbour Oyster Partnership Initiative (CHOPI) proposed the much smaller area of Bosham & Ichenor Creeks within Chichester Harbour as a potential site to protect oysters, as they felt it would benefit a new project to restock this area with native oyster. The proposal reached the stage of draft MCZ, when the RSG noted that other ENG features (estuarine rocky habitats, lagoon sand shrimp and starlet sea anemone) were found adjacent to the oysters in the same area. However, once COs were developed for the site, CHOPI contacted the RSG to request withdrawal of their proposal, as they felt that the inclusion of additional features would create unacceptable restrictions in the busy harbour and that the COs were not consistent with the aims of the CHOPI proposal. Members also questioned the accuracy of the habitat data (e.g. Estuarine Rocky Habitats) being proposed for inclusion (CHOPI email 29.06.2011). As a result, this site was removed from the network (RSG Meeting 10, July 2011).

South-west Rocks

South West Rocks, Ship Rock and Looe Gate are three prominent chalk reef structures that support high biodiversity on otherwise featureless sea bed and together were proposed by Sussex Seasearch as an MCZ together with a proposal for the wider chalk reef complex (Appendix 4). The former smaller area was submitted in the 3rd Progress Report as BAI 27 South West Rocks. The BAI was opposed by the fishing sector in particular, as there is trawling between the three rock features, and they believe the site would be impossible to effectively manage, given its small features. Outside the Balanced Seas process, the trawling sector and Sussex IFCA, developed a proposal for a voluntary agreement whereby the trawling sectors would avoid the rocks, and several local stakeholders considered this to be a suitable form of protection for this site (i.e. no formal designation as an MPA). The wildlife sectors are anxious that the high biodiversity of the site received protection as an MCZ in order to remove the risk of accidental damage the features might be subject to under a voluntary agreement alone and are keen to see the site protected from future seabed developments, such as cable-laying. They also feel that the site would act as a second replicate for Black Bream, a feature for designation in the Kingmere rMCZ 16.

After extended discussion, the RSG agreed to drop the site from the developing MPA network, and recommended that it should be protected through a voluntary agreement managed by the Sussex IFCA, with a monitoring programme to establish the effectiveness of the agreement. If the agreement was shown not be working, the site could be reintroduced into the MPA network as an MCZ.

Sheppey Cliffs and Foreshore

One option area progressed further than others, as it contained a geological feature as well as sheltered muddy gravel habitats that were considered to be particularly species rich according to biotope information collated by the Environment Agency. However, Local Group discussions revealed that the area would have significant negative impacts on the local trawling sector and, since the ENG habitat was represented elsewhere, it was dropped from the network.

3. Site Report Structure and List of rMCZs and rRAs

Each rMCZ and rRA has a site report that follows the template provided by the SNCBs. Additional sections have been added by Balanced Seas to provide more detailed information on the evolution of the site and the potential implications for stakeholders. The site reports thus contain the following sections:

1. **Site name**
2. **Site centre location** (expressed in ETRS89 coordinates)
3. **Surface area** (calculated in ETRS89 projection)
4. **Biogeographic region** (either Southern North Sea or Eastern English Channel)
5. **Features proposed for designation** (ENG features only: Broad-scale habitats, species / habitat / geology FOCI)
6. **Features not proposed for designation** (ENG features only)
7. **Map of site** (coordinates of vertices given in WGS 84 UTM 31N)
8. **Site summary**
9. **Detailed site description** - extracts of information or stakeholder correspondence held by the project to describe the ecological nature of the site and reference the datasets that have been used by the stakeholder group to recommend features and boundaries. **Maps** of those broad-scale habitats, species and habitat FOCI and geological/geomorphological features that have been listed for protection are included here, along with any southeast features (identified by the Wildlife Trusts).
10. **Site boundary** – description of the boundary points and why these have been set
11. **Conservation objectives** – referred to the appendix of individual CO sheets
12. **Sites to which this site is related** – how the site overlaps or is adjacent to existing MPAs or rRAs
13. **Supporting documentation and references** – a tabled list of data records used to identify the ENG features in the site (non-ENG feature data are not listed but are referenced in the site description)
14. **Stakeholder support for the site** – RSG comments made in the final RSG meeting (August 2011)
15. **Site summary of conservation objectives (COs) and proposed management measures** – a table of the conservation objectives for each feature, with accompanying activity causing a RECOVER objective. Comments from public authorities (MMO/IFCA/EA/NE), Local Groups and RSG members are also included.
16. **Evolution of the site** – a description of the major changes made to the site with the associated reason and reference to the relevant meeting report
17. **Implications for stakeholders** – a list of the major issues that have been raised during stakeholder meetings. This is not intended to be a comprehensive list of all the issues raised as these can all be found in the relevant meeting reports on the Balanced Seas website.

Table 6 lists the site numbers and names for all the rMCZs and rRAs recommended by the Balanced Seas RSG. Site Reports can be found as individual site reports (see Appendix 2 & 3).

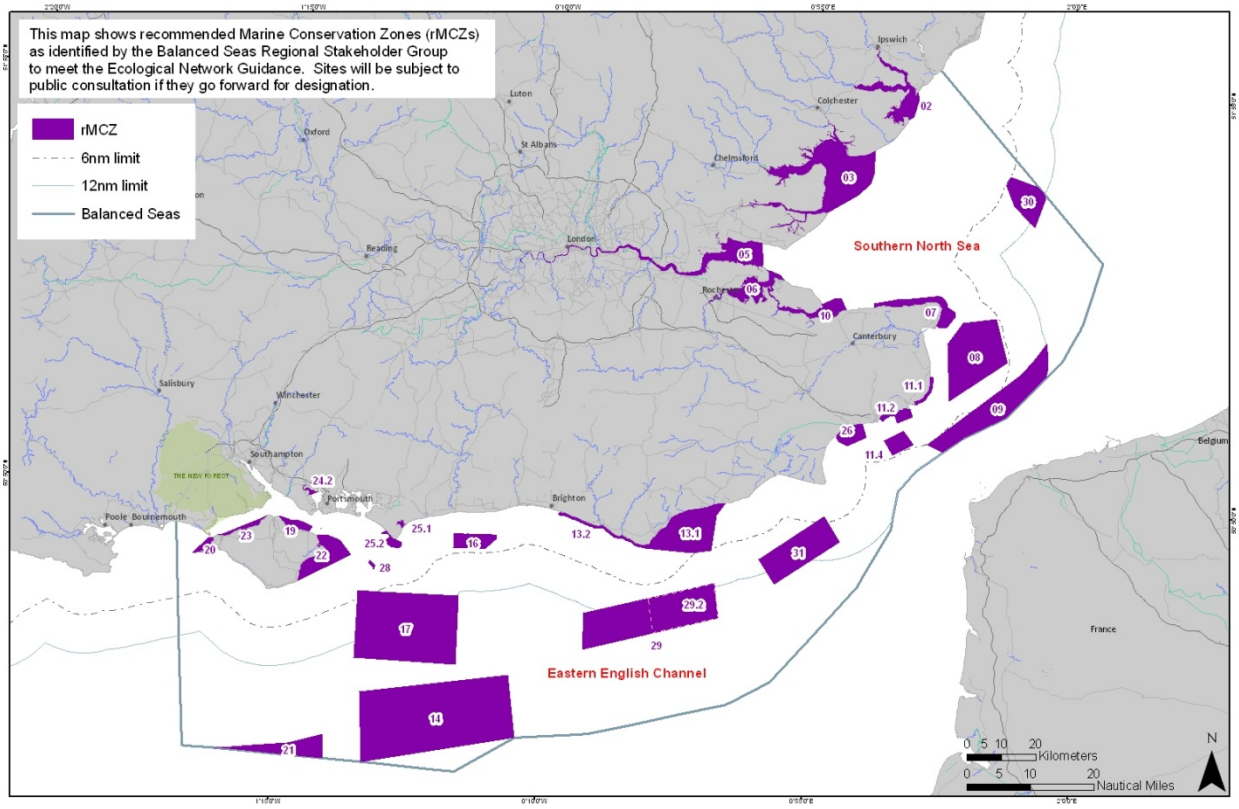
Table 13. Status and number of each Balanced Seas MCZ site proposal

Recommended Marine Conservation Zones:				**Recommended Reference Areas:**		
rMCZ	2	Stour and Orwell Estuaries		rRA	1	Colne Point
rMCZ	3	Blackwater, Crouch, Roach & Colne Estuaries		rRA	2	South Mersea
rMCZ	5	Thames Estuary		rRA	3	Holehaven Creek
rMCZ	6	Medway Estuary		rRA	4	Westgate Promontory
rMCZ	7	Thanet Coast		rRA	5	Turner Contemporary
rMCZ	8	Goodwin Sands		rRA	6	Goodwin Knoll
rMCZ	9	Offshore Foreland		rRA	7	South Foreland Lighthouse
rMCZ	10	Swale Estuary		rRA	8	Hythe Flats
rMCZ	11.1	Dover to Deal		rRA	9	Belle Tout to Beachy Head Light
rMCZ	11.2	Dover to Folkestone		rRA	10	Dolphin Head
rMCZ	11.4	Folkestone Pomerania		rRA	11	Church Norton Spit
rMCZ	13.1	Beachy Head East		rRA	12	Mixon Hole (Northern Slope)
rMCZ	13.2	Beachy Head West		rRA	13	North Utopia
rMCZ	14	Offshore Brighton		rRA	14	Wight-Barfleur
rMCZ	16	Kingmere		rRA	15	Tyne Ledges
rMCZ	17	Offshore Overfalls		rRA	16	Wootton Old Mill Pond
rMCZ	19	Norris to Ryde		rRA	17	King's Quay
rMCZ	20	The Needles		rRA	18	St Catherine's Point West
rMCZ	21	Wight-Barfleur extension		rRA	19	Newtown Harbour
rMCZ	22	Bembridge		rRA	20	Stalked Jellyfish (within Alum Bay)
rMCZ	23	Yarmouth to Cowes		rRA	21	Culver Spit
rMCZ	24.2	Fareham Creek		rRA	22	North Mistley
rMCZ	25.1	Pagham Harbour		rRA	23	Abbotts Hall Farm
rMCZ	25.2	Selsey Bill and the Hounds		rRA	24	Harwich Haven
rMCZ	26	Hythe Bay		rRA	25	Flying Fortress
rMCZ	28	Utopia				
rMCZ	29	East Meridian				
rMCZ	29.2	East Meridian (Eastern side)				
rMCZ	30	Kentish Knock East				
rMCZ	31	Inner Bank				

Recommended Marine Conservation Zones (rMCZs)

Version 1.0
Scale 1:863,298
Projection UTM Zone

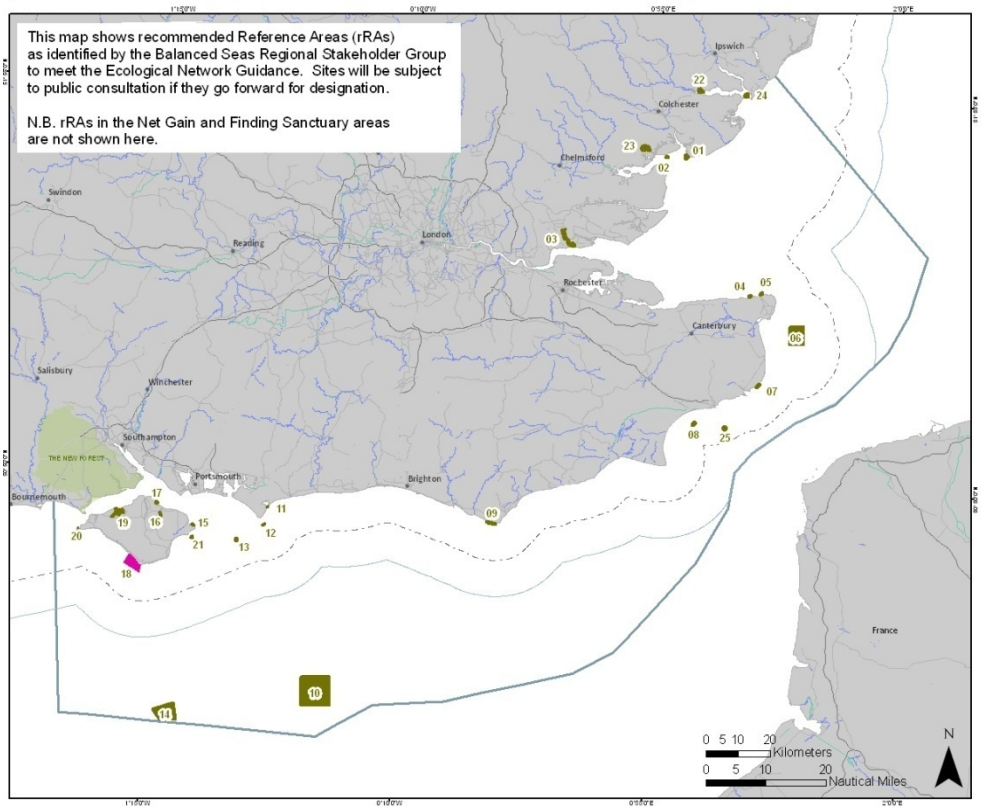
BalancedSeas



Recommended Reference Areas (rRAs)

Version 1.0
Scale 1:916,223
Projection UTM Zone 31N

BalancedSeas



Reference Areas

rRAs for intertidal broad-scale habitats and species and habitat FOCI:

1 Colne Point
2 South Mersea
3 Holehaven Creek
4 Westgate Promontory
5 Turner Contemporary
7 South Foreland Lighthouse
8 Hythe Flats
9 Belle Tout to Beachy Head Light
11 Church Norton Spit
12 Mixon Hole (Northern Slope)
13 North Utopia
15 Tyne Ledges
16 Wootton Old Mill Pond
17 King's Quay
19 Newtown Harbour
20 Stalked Jellyfish (within Alum Bay)
21 Culver Spit
22 North Mistley
23 Abbotts Hall Farm
24 Harwich Haven
25 Flying Fortress

rRAs for subtidal broad-scale habitats:

6 Goodwin Knoll
10 Dolphin Head
14 Wight-Barfleur
18 St Catherine's Point West

Legend

rRA accepted by RSG
rRA accepted but not supported by RSG
6nm limit
12nm limit
Balanced Seas

4. Annexes

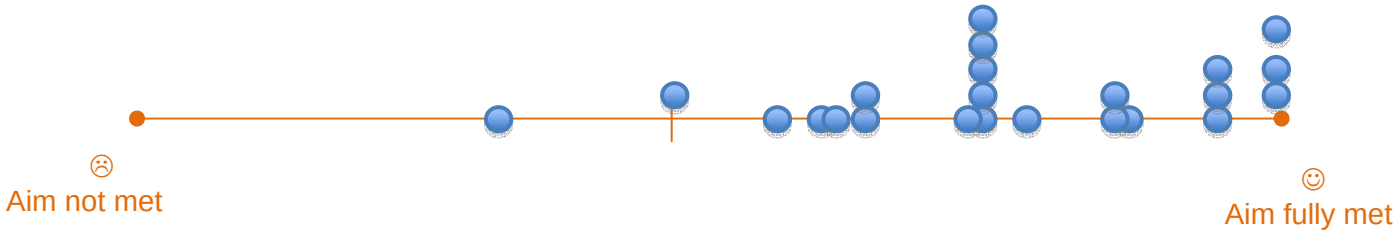
4.1 Balanced Seas Regional Stakeholder Group Members - September 2011

Sector	Organisation	First name	Second name
Leisure			
Diving	BSAC	Jane	Maddocks
Yachting	RYA	Paul	Rayner
Canoeing	Canoe England	Kevin	East
Kite Surfing	British Kite Surfing Association	Jude	Merchant
Sea Angling		Tony	Hills
Livelihoods			
Ports	Major Ports Group (UKMPG) and the British Ports Association (BPA)	Iain	Johnston
Fishing (Inshore)	Local Fisheries Representative	Ted	Legg
Fishing - under 10s (static gear)	NUTFA	Paul	Joy
Fishing - Shellfish	Shellfish Association of Great Britain	Richard	Haward
Fishing - FPO, beam trawling	SWFPO, NFFO	Keith	Schofield / Bill Brock
Fishing - Trawling - under and over 10 m		Alan	Griggs
Fishing - Over 10s, FPO, trawling sector (under and over 10m)		Paul	Gilson
Charter boats	Professional Boatman's Association	David	Hancock
Offshore renewables	EoN (on behalf of BWEA)	Rachel	Blackie
Aggregates	BMAPA	Mark	Russell
Shipping	Chamber of Shipping	Adrian	Lester
Marine Leisure industry	British Marine Federation	Brian	Clark
Local Government			
Local Authority	CSIG / East Sussex County Council	Roger	Thomas
Marine Ecology			
Birds	RSPB	Fay	Bouri / Alison Giacomelli
Wildlife Trusts	Hampshire Wildlife Trust	Jolyon	Chesworth
Marine ecology	Seasearch	Bryony	Chapman
Marine Wildlife	Marine Conservation Society	Jean-Luc	Solandt
Public/Policy Makers			
Statutory Nature Conservation	Joint Nature Conservancy Committee	Amy	Ridgeway
Statutory Nature Conservation	Natural England	Lisa	Jenner
Regulatory			
Public Authority	Environment Agency	Kate	Potter
IFCA	Kent & Essex IFCA	Joss	Wiggins
IFCA	Southern IFCA	Justine	Jury
IFCA	Sussex IFCA	Robert	Clark
IFCA	Eastern IFCA	Judith	Stoutt
Public Authority	Marine Management Organisation	Paul	Johnson
Other			
Owners	Crown Estates	David	Tudor
Defence	MOD	Susie	Norbury
Heritage and Archaeology	English Heritage	Dominique	de Moulins
International			
French fisheries	CRPMEM Nord - Pas de Calais / Picardie	Antony	Viera
Dutch fisheries	VisNed	Pim	Visser
Belgian fisheries	Consulent Rederscentrale	Tom	Craeynest

4.2 RSG Evaluation of the Balanced Seas Stakeholder Process

A. Please give your views on how far each element of this process was met.

1. A representative group of regional stakeholders (the RSG) drew up proposals for a regional MCZ network, following a set of ecological design guidelines signed off by Government.



Comments / Rationale

Those scoring towards the top (top third of the scale):

- Well structured, clear aims, good communication have all allowed it.
- The process has achieved a great deal. There has however been key challenges associated with reconciling the rigidity of the ENG with the ambiguity and uncertainty associated with the datasets.
- We met the ENG as far as possible. I have not given highest score as I think some of the boundaries have been drawn a bit tightly.
- Some stakeholders either withdrew or never came in first place.
- Time constraints and delays in data, key guidance has meant that the network delivered was not as good as it could be.
- It is never easy deciding on the best person from each sector to attend but v good representation across the sectors. The group worked strategically and well together.
- The RSG worked well to reach the targets.
- To the best of our ability.
- The weakness is in the imposed timescales & problems with the ENG.
- The object being to achieve consensus, the aim was not fully met but given the many conflicting sectors, it was a commendable result.
- We worked well to meet ENG guidelines however due to the nature of the project area and range of interests in a restricted geographic area, ecology at times was compromised by economic interests.
- It's right, all ecological parameters were taken in account.

Those scoring towards the middle (middle third of the scale):

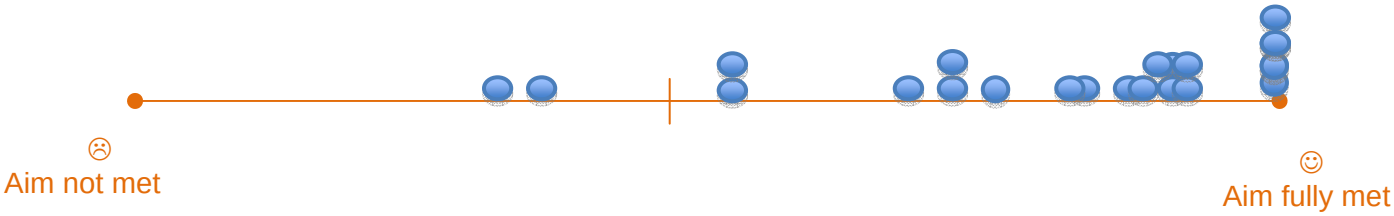
- Lack of evidence and information on implications impaired process and made it largely abstract.
- Self interest + socio-economic considerations dominated and came first. NE/JNCC should have brought forward evidence of the 'best' sites first. Not the fault of the project team.
- Generally good representation of stakeholder groups. Got the right people. Well facilitated.
- Sites not considered for just ecological reasons, nor socio-economic, a fudge has resulted.
- Yes it was a representative group, with foreign interests coming in too late, only in Feb 2011. The ecological design guidelines were there but they require a level of data availability which was not the case. The planning was too ambitious and therefore the process was "cramped" in the end.

Those scoring towards the bottom (bottom third of the scale):

N/A

2. There was a structured, coherent and transparent process that allowed the RSG to:

- Build up a knowledge base and an understanding of the issues.
- Explore potential solutions.
- Have a central role in planning.
- Have a process of negotiation and resolution of conflict between differing needs and interests.



Comments / Rationale

Those scoring towards the top:

- Brilliant.
- The interactions between local and regional groups are good however the late nature of the advice on compatibility and Cos was a real challenge.
- For a person that has not experienced this type of process before, it was easy to fit in and participate fully.
- The process could have been better structured in terms of having guidance available earlier on in the process. This was no fault of the Project Team, but rather a national issue.
- Yes we have all learned a lot we all deserve a foundation degree on MCZ.
- Worked very well within the constraints of the process.
- The process was well structured and flexible enough to allow for improvements as time went on.
- We spent a lot of time as a group working on this.

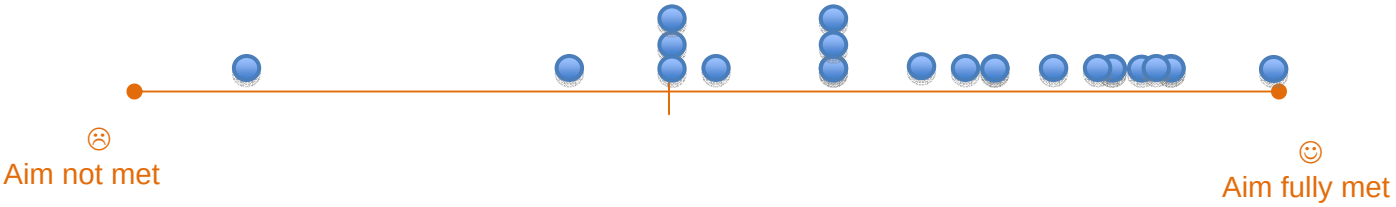
Those scoring towards the middle:

- Variation in information from SNCBs/Defra and last minute guidance contradicting previous info greatly reduced transparency.
- See point 1. NE/Defra/JNCC handed the difficult questions to stakeholders, instead of dealing with it themselves.
- It took a long time for 'activity' data to be correct and collected. This is a resource issue, but did cause significant issue in making judgements.
- It would be far easier if good science data was available.
- Sectoral wishes usually overruled by ecologist movement.
- Yes the process was as prescribed, it was however too compressed in time. But in this process stakeholders had a central role in planning, which seems lost once the projects are finished. This worries us greatly.

Those scoring towards the bottom:

N/A

3. a) There was a good process to identify the location for MCZs.



Comments / Rationale

Those scoring towards the top:

- Everyone worked very hard, all sectors conceded where problems occurred. All were respectful to everyone's opinions.
- Process very well managed.
- Occasional surprise could have been avoided if we had more time.
- Data constraint balanced against the structure, format and constraints of ENG. Reference sites were a step too far. Fisheries management issues a major hurdle.
- Agree, however, like to reinstate previous comment about guidance arriving too late.
- Yes the whole RSG played its part.
- Not easy to identify locations at fist, given that there was a lot of mistrust between fishers and green groups, but bridges were built.
- Worked well within the nationally imposed constraints.
- Adequate discussion time allowed and investigation encouraged.

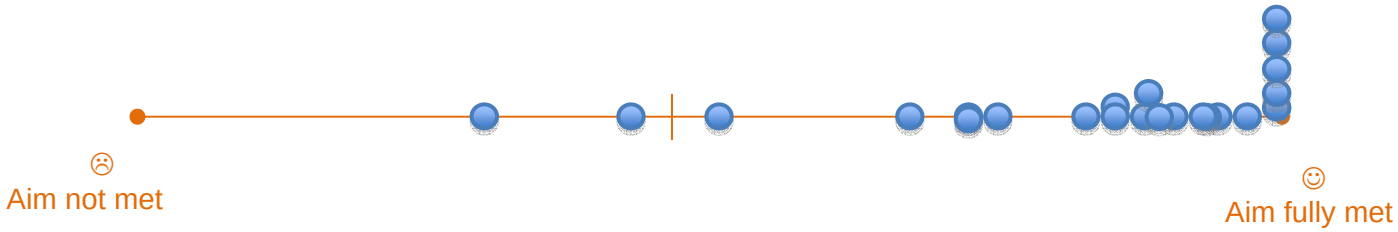
Those scoring towards the middle:

- I do feel the process was flawed in that it tried to please socio-economics and conservation whilst fully pleasing neither. But this is the issue with compromise. I also felt that boundaries changed, particularly in the offshore environment, according to who was in the room and who shouted loudest.
- As per 2 – data was not great on habitats or activities.
- See last comment.
- The process went ok until at a very late stage a new set of data came in, forcing a lot of work to be re-done.
- Guidance was received late in process, data collation continued throughout process which led to constant revisions. Driven by socio-economic interests initially – only slowly turned to be balanced by ecology.
- The RSG took into account the socioeconomics data too, to define the location. I regret that sometimes, the ecological data are more important than the economic data.

Those scoring towards the bottom:

- More time needed to identify the best location of features in need/worthy of protection – where designation would have least socio-economic impact. The deadline, lack of survey data, reliance on data of low confidence, or old data, meant that this is un-achievable.

3. b) The decisions were taken by stakeholders.



Comments / Rationale

Those scoring towards the top:

- There were less ecological / wildlife expertise than perhaps there may have been.
- Well run process with high level of stakeholder involvement.
- There was a discussion process that resulted in compromise/consensus.
- To the best of our ability.
- Yes consensus was to allow us to even agree or not as was mostly the case.
- The difficulty is the late supply/inadequacy of information available to stakeholders e.g. final recommendations had to be made without certainty on management measures.
- Local Groups' comments and deliberations were given due weight but the overall decisions were taken by the RSG. All objections and assumptions were fully recorded.
- We didn't always agree but all stakeholders agreed proposals before moving on to next stage – consensus!
- It's a consensus but ecological opinion is the most important by my point of view (French fishing – suggest ecological opinion "seemed to be" might be what was meant).
- Or by the SAP indirectly…

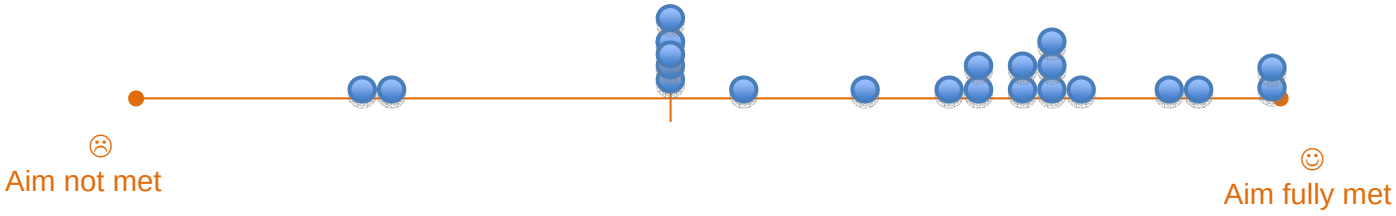
Those scoring towards the middle:

- Difficult to make decisions by committee.
- Decisions were more or less taken by the team with stakeholder input. The team had a target to meet and therefore 'steered' the decision making process.

Those scoring towards the bottom:

- Project Team guided RSG at times.

4. The process and final recommendations are understood by a wide set of stakeholders, especially those who will, or are likely to be impacted by the advent of an MCZ network. This includes stakeholders who have national, regional and local interests.



Comments / Rationale

Those scoring towards the top:

- All those on the RSG understand the process. There is still a big communications job to be done with, particularly, local users of sites.
- Final recommendations are understood, although owing to the complexity of the process, I still think some stakeholder don't fully understand the process used. This is often related to the more complex processed such as the Vulnerability Assessment and Gap Analysis.
- Yes but misinformation's and fear is a problem.
- Yes well understood.
- Good, clear material supplied for dissemination to my sector.

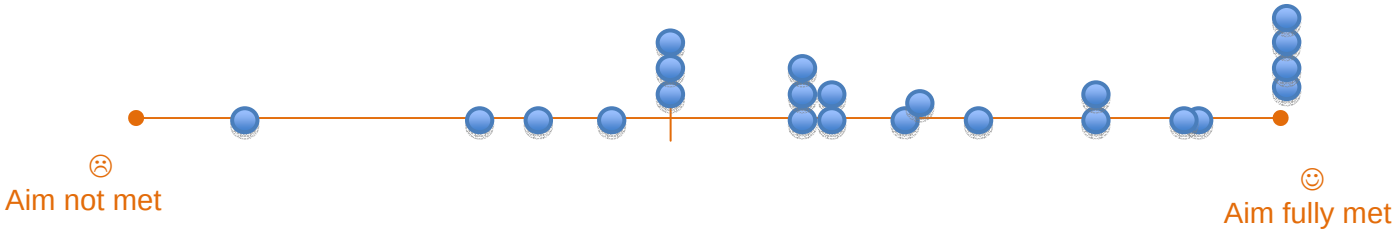
Those scoring towards the middle:

- More work needs to be done to ensure all stakeholders are clear on the objectives.
- Some stakeholders – i.e. commercial fishing sector – still are very uninformed in some areas – i.e. the IoW – no united voice, communication.
- There is a good deal left to do to communicate the locations and justification for the areas designated as a rMCZ.
- Comms as good as they can be due to contentious issues and timescales.
- Yes for most stakeholders inside RSG. No for stakeholders outside of it.
- Both the RSG + project have to make better efforts to inform a wider audience.
- Yes.
- RSG well informed. Local Groups in main well informed though more focussed on their "local" issues rather than wider achievement of network.

Those scoring towards the bottom:

- Confusion will always exist because of the lack of finality.
- There is still a major lack of understanding amongst many stakeholder, and distrust of some of the parties involved.

5. The best available data was used.



Comments / Rationale

Those scoring towards the top:

- New data arrived continuously and was even commissioned by RSG where possible.
- But the 'best' was still inadequate in some cases – more reliable data needed to designate some features for protection, when this will have such significant detriment to individual livelihoods & communities.
- In most cases, albeit arguably inadequate for task.
- But data extent/resolution was constrained and limited.
- In terms of what was brought forward, this aim was fully met. Some stakeholders, however, alluded to extra data very late in the process – most of this related to activity data, so a lot of this may have been more subjective rather than objective.

- Unfortunately much of the data was inadequate and a major survey effort will be required.
- Especially regarding the REC data, which I know caused extra work for the Project Team.
- But still a lack of confidence on some habitat data. Concerning socio-economic data about the fishing sector it's quite hard to have all the best available data from the ministry.

Those scoring towards the middle:

- There is a layer of better resolution data which was available but was not incorporated, but the willingness to incorporate the REC data was brave and effective.
- As per 2 – data often arrived far too late when decisions had already been made.
- Not enough up to date science.
- But sometimes the best was very poor.
- There were big concerns throughout the process about the quality and extent of data available. A lot was provided to project though some wasn't represented until individuals or organisations chased Project Team. Much more data required to inspire confidence of many stakeholders.
- It's so difficult to have right socioeconomic data that we can't be satisfied. VMS's data are not sufficient to define the value. Catches value are not taken into account.

Those scoring towards the bottom:

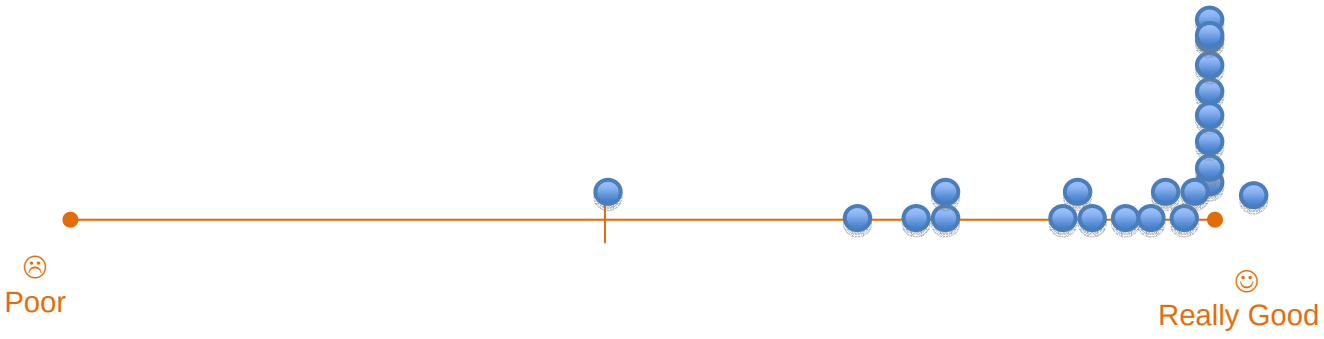
- But the data though the best available still appeared to be poor.
- May be true, but data used very poor over a large area of project.

B. Any other comments that you want to make about how the Balanced Seas process delivered on the aims set for it at the outset?

- A great team – very organised & well managed.
- Project team & facilitation excellent. Any failings down to Defra/SNCBs, not Balanced Seas.
- Project team & NE/JNCC staff at meetings were excellent.
- Team managed the issues well given difficulty of task.
- Well done. A very good job done in difficult circumstances.
- The process was & is too rigid.
- Needed more time.

C. How do you rate the support given by the Project Team or members:

To you as individual stakeholders?



Comments / Rationale

Those scoring towards the top:

- Excellent. Well done.
- Richard is fantastic – we owe a lot to him. The process would not have worked as well, or have been as enjoyable without him.
- Excellent support throughout.
- Project team always listened and took on board out comments.
- Information came at too short notice.
- The team often went above and beyond, which was great.
- Superb.
- Very good.
- As RSG member – good.
- Timescale pressures meant that papers were often circulated at the last minute – not the team's fault. They worked really hard.
- Very helpful when I was unable to access the website at work and answered all questions. I have been very impressed throughout.
- Open minded, communicative, but with a clear goal and purpose!

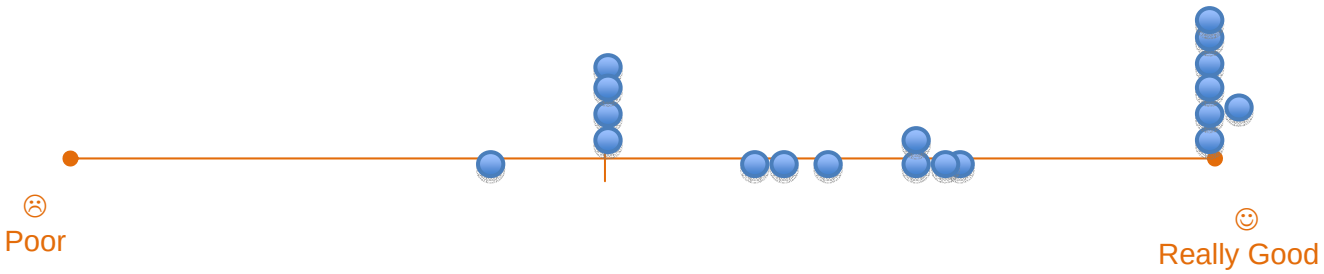
Those scoring towards the middle:

- Project Team did not have time to offer much individual/organisational support. Would have been good to have had them attend EA meeting to help gather info, steer process and explain what/how we should be involved. Felt we had to find our own way.

Those scoring towards the bottom:

N/A

To your sector overall?



Comments / Rationale

Those scoring towards the top:

- Excellent. Well done!
- Very good.

Those scoring towards the middle:

- Still a need to involve the IFCAs at the national level.
- More mixed.
- Failed to reach wider audience.
- The new set of data had a bad effect and set back the process. Our Belgian colleagues were very much "disadvantaged" by this and therefore dropped out!

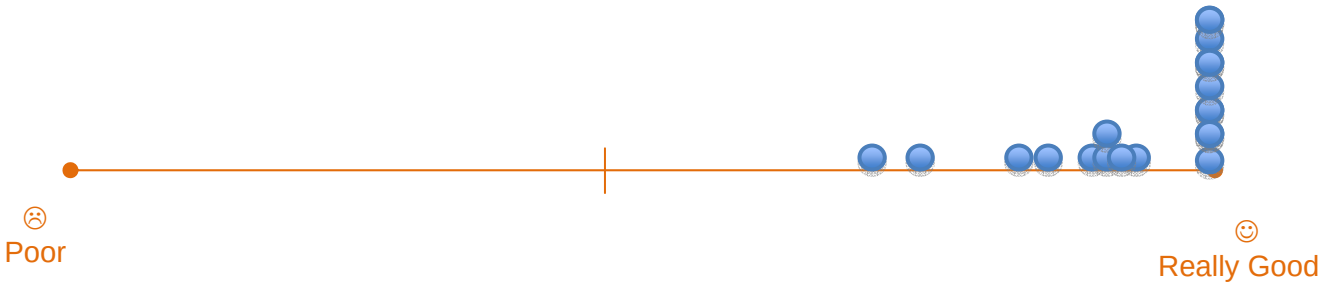
- Project Team did not have time to offer much individual/organisational support. Would have been good to have had them attend EA meeting to help gather info, steer process and explain what/how we should be involved. Felt we had to find our own way.
- I would like to have compatible shape (for geographic position) with my sector. And so, I need to have in time geographic position to talk with my sector (fishermen).

Those scoring towards the bottom:

N/A

D. How do you rate the following aspects of 3KQ's involvement:

Process *design*: The value of having outside input into design of meetings within this process (different groups / types of meetings and the different elements contained within meetings)?



Comments / Rationale

Those scoring towards the top:

- All of team were brilliant – pleasant to work with. Hannah really held it all together – brilliant.
- Without them the process would not have been so successful.
- The range of facilitation was good and made the process work.
- Very good.
- As best we could hope for.
- Very worthwhile.
- Meetings were well run and advance material helpful + well organised.
- This allowed team to focus on the content!
- Really benefited from independent facilitation and professional view on how to get most of groups by splitting work/issues across meetings/groups.

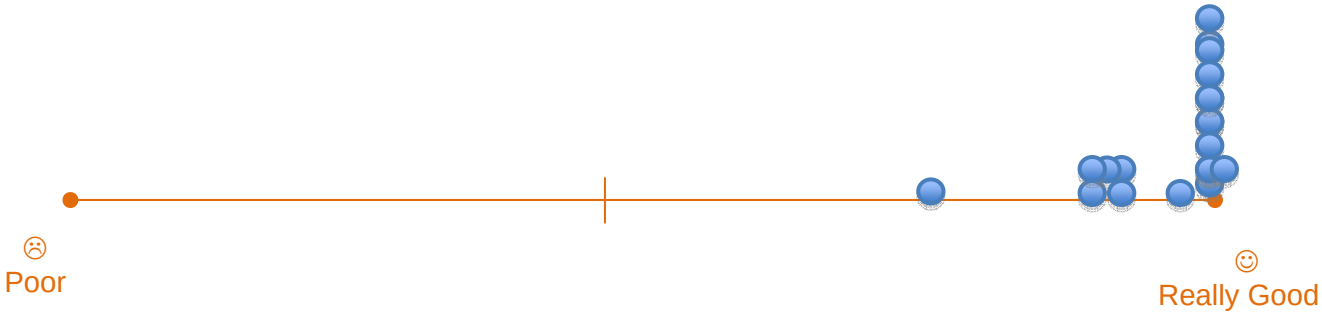
Those scoring towards the middle:

N/A

Those scoring towards the bottom:

N/A

Process *facilitation*: The value to the process of having an independent facilitation team (facilitator and report writer) within RSG meetings?



Comments / Rationale

Those scoring towards the top:

- Richard is fantastic!
- Primarily because of the individual involved. Has not worked so well elsewhere.
- Couldn't have done without it! Excellent facilitation all the way through.
- It worked very well – a great facilitator.
- Yes it worked.
- Invaluable – neither the Project Team, nor stakeholders could have held these meetings together. Very well done and effectual + very professional.
- Absolutely essential.
- Richard kept a good grip on the RSG as a whole and kept things moving forward. Reports were excellent and comprehensive. Well done – your efforts contributed greatly to the overall result.
- Same as above, plus excellent quality of the team.
- Richard steered meetings really well – kept process moving and kept mood in the room 'light' even when contentious issues were discussed.

Those scoring towards the middle:

N/A

Those scoring towards the bottom:

N/A