

Wildlife and  
Countryside



# Marine Protected Areas A Charter for our seas



We in the United Kingdom are rightly proud of our “Island Nation” status - our seas and coastline have defined much of our history and our culture.

But their ability to cope with the pressures we put on them - whether over-fishing, habitat degradation, industrial pollution or the impacts of climate change - is finite.

A hundred years ago, vast native oyster fields the size of Wales carpeted the Irish Sea; thriving ports such as Lowestoft and Great Yarmouth sustained great fleets, which chased enormous schools of herring in the North Sea; Bluefin Tuna, now critically endangered, were abundant around our shores.

This is why the landmark Marine and Coastal Access Act (2009) was so significant.

Passed with overwhelming cross-party support, this legislation established the UK’s ambition to arrest the declining productivity, health and diversity of our marine environment through the establishment of a network of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) throughout the UK’s seas.

Five years on, we still have a long way to go. Although we have begun the process of designating sites in UK seas, there remains much to do to deliver a truly ecologically coherent network in UK seas.

The Marine Charter campaign, supported by 21 UK NGOs and more than 130 Parliamentarians from across the political parties, has demonstrated the strength of the cross-party and cross-NGO resolve that still exists to see a full network designated.

This political support emulates the well-documented public support: in the development of the 2009 Marine and Coastal Access Act, more than 627,000 people supported the call for more marine protected areas; over 40,000 responded to the recent Defra consultation on the first tranche of Marine Conservation Zones – one of the largest ever responses to a Defra consultation; and 350,000 signatures were delivered to Downing Street in June 2013 in support of this full network.

As we edge towards the end of this Parliament, the Charter is calling on all parties to echo this political and public backing through clear manifesto commitments to complete the UK network by 2016.

Now is the most important time for UK marine conservation. More than 60 years after the first national parks were established on land, we have never before, and may never again, have such an opportunity to safeguard the remnants of our, once rich, marine habitats and wildlife.



**Joan Edwards**

# The Marine Charter

Wildlife and Countryside Link calls for the swift designation of a representative and well managed Ecologically Coherent Network of Marine Protected Areas in UK seas by 2016.

We call on this and future Governments to ensure that this network meets international principles on coherence, and represents the full range of features in the UK seas as required by the relevant Marine Acts.

The full network must include ambitious proposals within the commitment to two future tranches of Marine Conservation Zones in English Seas in 2015/16, alongside wider marine protected areas, and must be well managed to maintain sites that are in good condition and recover those that are damaged.

Such a network is essential not only to stem the alarming decline in marine habitats and species, but also to ensure that the enormous social and economic benefits derived from marine goods and services can be realised for generations to come.

*For a full list of parliamentarians who have signed the Charter please visit [www.marinecharter.org.uk](http://www.marinecharter.org.uk)*





Photo credit: Andrew Pearson

“The UK is legally obligated to establish networks of marine protected areas to bring about healthy oceans. It is also required to manage these areas to maintain or restore the wildlife and ecosystems within them. In order to satisfy these legal obligations, we support the Marine Charter which calls for the designation of a representative and well managed ecologically coherent network of Marine Protected Areas in the UK by 2016 at the latest.”

James Thornton, Chief Executive, ClientEarth





Photo credit: Sarah Baulch

“It is vital to act now to protect UK marine species and habitats from ever increasing human induced threats. A well-managed Ecologically Coherent Network of Marine Protected Areas will make a significant contribution to providing a healthy environmental and economic future for generations to come.”

Jenny Lonsdale, Director, Environmental Investigation Agency





Photo credit: Greenpeace

“We urgently need greater marine protection. UK seas are home to a vast number of sea birds, cetaceans and many other rare and special flora and fauna. An essential part of this must be about collaborating with the coastal fishermen that use low impact methods, safeguard our marine environment, and who are vital to the economy and culture of local communities.”

John Sauven, Executive Director, Greenpeace UK

**GREENPEACE**



Photo credit: M P Simmonds HSI

“Our seas are home to a wide variety of animals but they are being increasingly industrialised and the threat that this and a changing climate pose is still coming into focus. Precautionary action is urgently needed and a well-managed and ecologically coherent network of Marine Protected Areas would help protect and restore endangered marine and habitats and species”

Mark Simmonds OBE, Humane Society International/UK

Celebrating Animals | Confronting Cruelty  
Worldwide



**HUMANE SOCIETY**  
INTERNATIONAL  
UNITED KINGDOM



Photo credit: IFAW / Friedlaender

“IFAW supports Link’s Marine Charter campaign as we recognise that MPAs can help protect marine habitats and vulnerable cetacean species such as the Harbour Porpoise, which currently face numerous threats in UK seas.”

Philip Mansbridge, UK Director, International Fund for Animal Welfare



Photo credit: Paul Naylor

“We’re rightly proud of our island nation status, but this also means being good custodians – protecting vulnerable habitats and species; fishing sustainably; and not littering our beaches and polluting our waters. A full ecologically coherent network of Marine Protected Areas is a vital tool in ensuring the diversity, restoration and ongoing productivity of our iconic seas.”

Sam Fanshawe, Chief Executive, Marine Conservation Society





Photo credit: Martin Kitching

“Our seas and oceans are an indicator of the health of the environment, home to many vulnerable and iconic species and also a critical part of the planet's ecosystem, so MARINElife has no hesitation in endorsing the Marine Charter campaign and reiterating the requirement for the undelayed designation of a representative and well managed Ecologically Coherent Network of Marine Protected Areas in UK seas by 2016.”

Andrew McLeish, Development Manager, MARINElife





Photo credit: National Trust

“Our coast and seas are a precious shared resource for the nation. A well-managed, comprehensive network of Marine Protected Areas will help protect the richness of our coastal and marine wildlife. This is key to the health and integrity of these special places for the future, for us all.”

Dame Helen Ghosh, Director-General, National Trust





Photo credit: Claire Goodwin

“Our seas are our future, protecting them is not just about designations, we need to manage our seas sustainably for our future generations, be that for porpoises or people”

Dr. Jade Berman, Northern Ireland Marine Task Force





Photo credit: Stephen Marsh

“ORCA exists to build a better picture of the whales and dolphins in UK waters and to find ways in which their habitats can be better safeguarded for future generations. The designation of Marine Protected Areas would be a huge step forward in achieving this goal, and would send a signal that the Government is serious about protecting our seas and marine habitats.”

Sally Hamilton, Chief Executive, ORCA





“The Ramblers support the aims of Link’s Marine Charter campaign. As a nation, we love to be by the seaside; we value the coast for its natural beauty, sense of peace and tranquillity and wildlife. We need healthy coastal and marine environments to enable people to lead happier, healthier lives.”

Benedict Southworth, Chief Executive, Ramblers





Photo credit: R Shucksmith

“The RSPB welcome the commitment of our Parliamentarians to the completion of a representative and ecologically coherent network of MPAs. I hope that we will see this commitment put into action for effective sites that are truly protecting our marine wildlife. These measures are essential to turn around long-term declines in the health of our seas and ensure that we have a marine environment that future generations can use and enjoy.”

Dr Mike Clarke, Chief Executive, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds



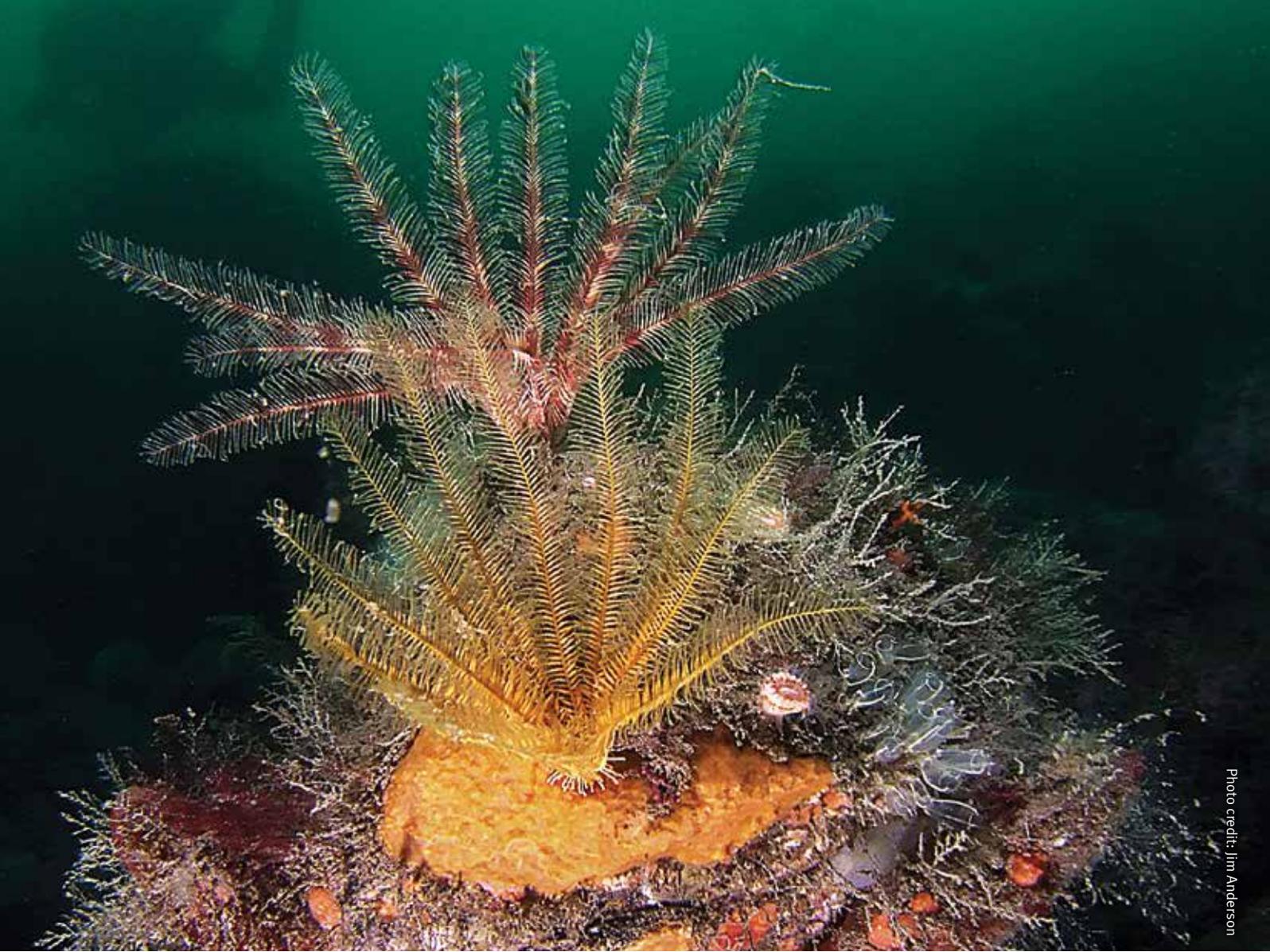


Photo credit: Jim Anderson

“Scotland’s responsibility for 61% of UK seas means we have a vital interest in coordinated action to effect marine ecological recovery. We all benefit from the sea: from the beauty and biodiversity of our West coast sea lochs to the potential abundance of the North Sea. And yet the life within them continues to suffer unsustainable damage. Our seas now need to heal. In 50 years this must be seen as a turning point, when scientific evidence emboldened political will to meet this urgent challenge of global ocean stewardship, and actually recover our damaged seas. A well-managed network of Marine Protected Areas has to be our shared contribution to that legacy.”

Jen Anderson, Chief Officer, Scottish Environment LINK





Photo credit: Rohan Holt

“Lying where warm southern waters meet cold nutrient rich currents from the north, the sea around Wales is special in many ways and is teeming with wildlife. Hidden beneath the waves are landscapes every bit as varied as those found above water, creating an extraordinary range of habitats supporting a breath-taking variety of marine life. Our seas support internationally important populations of seals and dolphins, and the many cliffs and islands along the coastline are home to globally important seabird colonies. It is essential that gaps within the Welsh network of MPAs are filled in order to ensure the UK network is coherent and robust and that sites within this network are properly managed to help our precious marine wildlife recover and thrive.”

Susan Evans, Director, Wales Environment Link





Photo credit: Pine Eisfeld-Pierantonio WDC

“There are locations known to be important for wide ranging species that, if protected as MPAs, could make a valuable contribution to the protection of these species.”

Chris Butler-Stroud, Chief Executive, Whale and Dolphin Conservation



Photo credit: WWT

“Many of our sea ducks are vulnerable and in decline. A coherent network of Marine Protected Areas, taking into account the needs of mobile species such as common scoter and long tailed duck, is a vitally important component of saving these beautiful, charismatic birds for future generations.”

Martin Spray CBE, Chief Executive, Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust





Photo credit: Paul Naylor

“A healthy and fully functioning marine environment is vital to us all- for our health, wellbeing and economy. The designation of a well managed, ecologically coherent network of Marine Protected Areas gives us the opportunity to help restore our seas to Living Seas- those pulsating with life, that support livelihoods and that continue to be a source of joy and wonder to us all to enjoy”

Stephen Trotter, Director of England, The Wildlife Trusts





“As an island nation, whose history has been inexorably shaped and fashioned by the sea since its first existence, we have a duty and responsibility to better manage the marine environment which surrounds us. World Animal Protection supports the Marine Charter campaign as part of that duty and by way of acknowledging the greater responsibility that needs to be taken to better protect our seas along with the lives of the marine animals who live there.”

Simon Pope, Director of Campaigns and Communications, World Animal Protection UK





Photo credit: Paul Naylor

“WWF supports the Marine Charter because an ecologically coherent network of Marine Protected Areas is essential to restoring our marine environment. There is still much to be done to rebuild the once vibrant marine ecosystems surrounding our islands so they can underpin a sustainable future for coastal communities and marine industries. WWF is working with partners around the UK to improve the planning and management of human activities to enable this recovery.”

David Nussbaum, Chief Executive, WWF – UK





Photo credit: Alex Mustard

“The UK has made great efforts to establish an effective ecologically coherent network of Marine Protected Areas in the UK. This work is vital to protect the incredible diversity of marine habitats and species found in the UK’s territorial waters. ZSL support Link’s Marine Charter to help ensure our marine life is best protected so that it can be enjoyed by future generations.”

Rayner Piper, UK and Europe Programme Manager, ZSL

**ZSL**  
LIVING CONSERVATION



Photo credit: Dan Bolt

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