

## **CONSULTATION QUESTIONS**

1. Do you support the development of an MPA network in Scotland's Seas?

Yes  No

They are a vital component in the restoration of marine habitats and the general health of our seas.

### **Individual possible Nature Conservation MPAs**

2. Do you have any comments on the case for designation, management options and socioeconomic assessment for the *Small Isles* possible Nature Conservation MPA?

Designation:

Yes  No

From the available public data and personal observations the area is of high conservation importance.

However, I am concerned that the adjacent sea lochs – Scavaig, Slapin and Eishort have not been included in the proposal for the Small Isles MPA. It would seem that the loch systems have no official habitat and species data. Dredging in various forms has degraded some sections of the sea bed and current private research has found four BAP habitats, which would survive if the area was appended to the proposal, they are -

1. Circumlittoral Muds with Sea Pens
2. Maerl Beds *Phymatolithon calcareum* - Live maerl
3. Sea Grass Beds *Zostera marina*
4. Intertidal Under-Boulder Communities

The richness of the sea lochs is confirmed with the discovery of 26 previously unrecorded species (including the above BAP habitats), in addition there is confirmation that black-throated divers *Gavia arctica* have successfully bred this year for the first time in South Skye adjacent to Lochs Slapin and Eishort. The Lochs are now important as feeding grounds during the whole year for the birds.

Management Options:

Yes  No

Designation of the whole area could minimise destructive methods of fishing and fish farming then promote sustainable lighter touch techniques.

Socioeconomic Assessment:

Yes ✓  No

With reduced impacts, marine wildlife would thrive enabling more tourist targeted boat trips. Prawn creels and clam diving would be sustainable and provide local employment.

All of the above:

Yes ✓  No

The addition of the three South Skye Lochs would protect valuable biodiversity and ensure the wellbeing of visitors and resident alike.

### **Choices to represent features in the MPA Network**

- 3. Recognising the scientific advice from JNCC included alternatives for representing offshore subtidal sands and gravels, ocean quahog and shelf banks and mounds in the Southern North Sea, do you have a preference or comments on the following combinations to represent these features, bearing in mind Turbot Bank will need to be designated to represent sandeel in this region:**

Firth of Forth Banks Complex   
Turbot bank and Norwegian Boundary Sedimentary Plain   
Or Firth of Forth Banks Complex, Turbot bank and Norwegian Boundary Sedimentary Plain

None

- 4. Do you have any comments on the case for designation, management options and socioeconomic assessments for the preference you have indicated in the question above, regarding alternatives for representing offshore subtidal sands and gravels, ocean quahog and shelf banks and mounds in the Southern North Sea?**

Yes  No ✓

Comments

- 5. Recognising the scientific advice from JNCC included alternatives for representing the burrowed mud feature in the Fladens, do you have a preference or comments on the following combinations to represent these features, bearing in mind the part of Central Fladen (known as Central**

**Fladen (Core)) containing tall seapen (*Funiculina quadrangularis*) will need to be designated to represent tall seapen in this region:**

Central Fladen pMPA only

The tall sea-pen component of Central Fladen, plus Western Fladen

Or the tall sea-pen component of Central Fladen, plus South-East Fladen.

None

- 6. Do you have any comments on the case for designation, management options and socioeconomic assessments for the preference you have indicated in the question above, regarding alternatives for representing the burrowed mud feature in the Fladens?**

Yes  No

Comments

- 7. Recognising the scientific advice from JNCC included alternatives for representing offshore subtidal sands and gravels, offshore deep sea mud, and burrowed mud in OSPAR Regions III and V, do you have a preference or comments on the following combinations to represent these features:**

South-West Sula Sgeir and Hebridean slope

Or Geikie slide and Hebridean slope

None

- 8. Do you have any comments on the case for designation, management options and socioeconomic assessments for the preference you have indicated in the question above, regarding alternatives for representing offshore subtidal sands and gravels, offshore deep sea mud, and burrowed mud in OSPAR Regions III and V?**

Yes  No

Comments

## **Sustainability Appraisal**

**9. Do you have any comments on the Sustainability Appraisal of the MPA network as a whole?**

Yes  No

Comments

## **Final Thoughts**

**10. On the basis of your preferences on which pMPAs should be designated, do you view this to form a complete or ecologically coherent network, subject to the completion and recommendations of SNH's further work on the 4 remaining search locations?**

Yes  No

Comments

**11. Do you have any other comments on the case for designation, management options, environmental or socioeconomic assessments of the pMPAs, or the network as a whole?**

Yes  No

Add the three South Skye sea lochs to the Small Isles proposed MPA.

**Thank You.**