



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

Lindisfarne

Consultation factsheet for candidate Highly Protected
Marine Area (HPMA)

Date: July 2022



Figure 1: Arctic Tern Farne Islands © Natural England - Allan Drewitt June 2013

Introduction

This factsheet outlines why Lindisfarne has been identified as a candidate HPMA, providing an overview of the ecological importance, where this area is located and our current knowledge of the activities within the area. This factsheet may be updated with additional evidence after consultation if this area is designated.

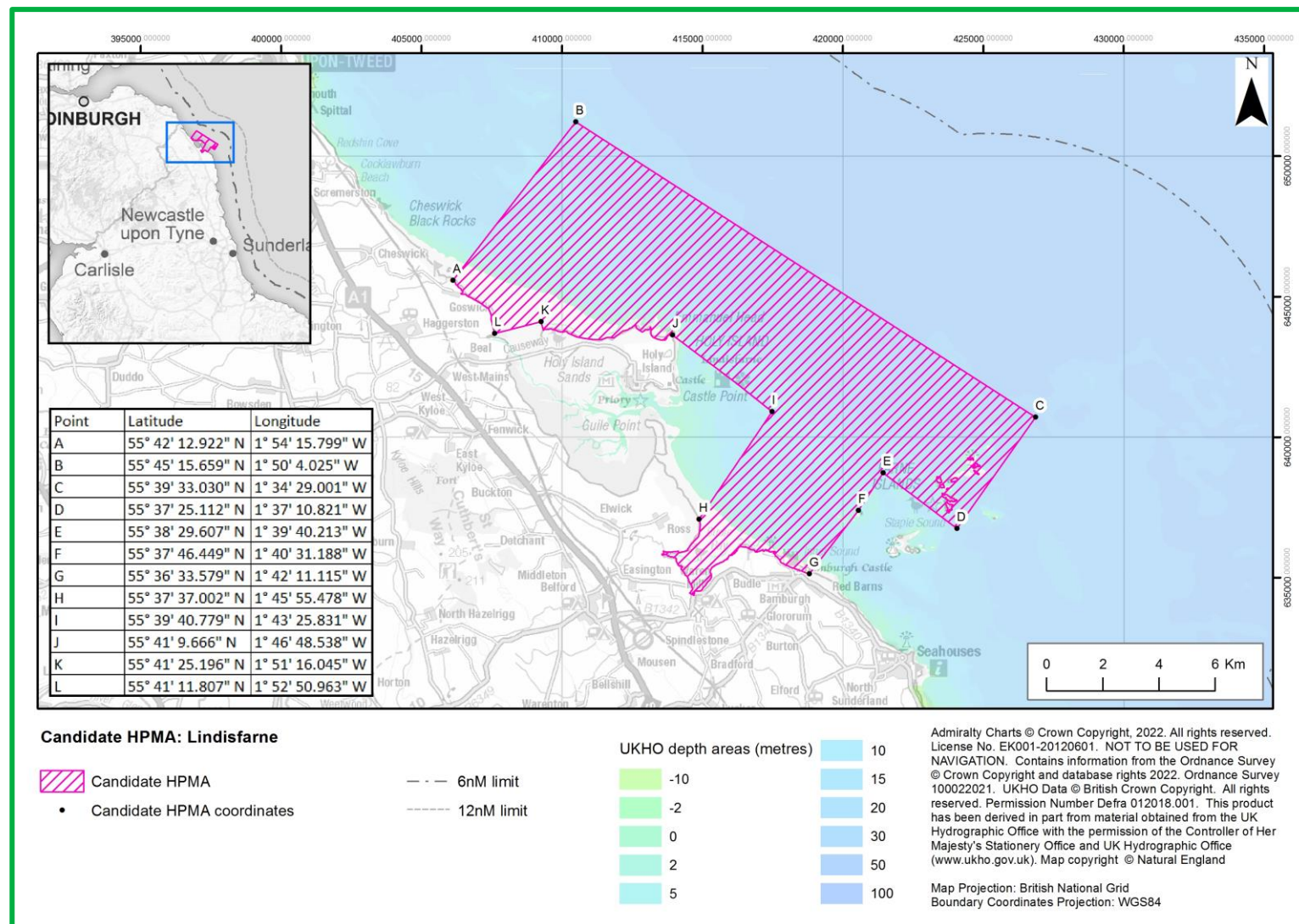
Where is the candidate HPMA located?

Lindisfarne is a moderately exposed northeast-facing inshore area located on the Northumberland coast and within the 12 nautical mile territorial sea limit of the Northern North Sea region, covering an area of 129km².

The area extends from the intertidal zone north of Goswick, north-east out to sea and south-east; it then returns inland south of Budle Bay at Bamburgh. It includes the intertidal habitat on the north shore of Holy Island, Budle Bay and encompasses the outer group of the Farne Islands, excluding Inner Farne. The map on the following page shows the current boundary of the candidate HPMA.

This candidate HPMA overlaps with several other Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) in Northumberland, including four Special Protection Areas (SPAs), Berwickshire & North Northumberland Coast Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Berwick to St Mary's Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ) along the Northumbria coastline. A map showing these Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) in relation to the Lindisfarne candidate HPMA can be found in Annex 1. In addition, this area overlaps with three intertidal Sites of Special Scientific Interest.

Map of Lindisfarne candidate HPMA



What habitats and species are found in this candidate HPMA?



Figure 2: Grey seal in a kelp forest © Natural England - Angela Gall

Lindisfarne candidate HPMA includes some of the most diverse intertidal and subtidal habitats in the North Sea, both in a UK and European context. It is home to a variety of threatened and/or important species including seagrass beds, blue mussel beds, fragile sponge communities and intertidal under boulder communities. The rich intertidal muddy sediments, full of worms and sand shrimp feed thousands of wintering birds such as waders and geese.

The area is the only regular British wintering site for light-bellied brent geese, during their winter migration from the Arctic. This bird haven also supports breeding Arctic and little tern, puffins and guillemots on the Farne Islands. The area also provides important foraging and haul out areas for grey seals and the Northumberland colony which provides 3% of the British annual pup production.

Deeper sediment habitats, while appearing more barren than intertidal areas, provide habitat and food sources for important commercial fish species such as herring and cod, living in the water column.

Why have we identified this as a candidate HPMA?

The Lindisfarne candidate HPMA is an incredibly diverse and varied location, providing the opportunity to further protect a wide range of important habitats and species. It has been identified for its high abundance of species in the Northern North Sea Region, with over 850 species recorded here, of which 40 have been identified as threatened or important including benthic species, marine mammals, seabirds and fish.



Figure 3: Common lobster © Natural England - Trudy Russell 2016

These habitats and species have the potential to contribute to a range of ecosystem services. This includes 'blue carbon' habitats such as the muddy habitats in this area, which provide important carbon storage, offering a nature-based solution to climate change.

In addition, small areas of saltmarsh and seagrass are present which are important for absorbing carbon, building it into roots, shoots and leaves as they grow. Furthermore, extensive kelp forest habitats can be important for the uptake of carbon and its transportation to the surrounding sediment habitats. These habitats also help to protect coastlines, reducing the force of waves.

The area is relatively degraded with habitats and species in overlapping MPAs in unfavourable condition along with the presence of pressures associated with commercial fishing and recreational activities. Protected features which exist both within the HPMA and existing MPAs will be subject to the higher conservation objective proposed for HPMA in the overlapping area. Based on our understanding of this area it presents a good candidate HPMA

to develop our understanding of recovery in a coastal setting for the Northern North Sea region, particularly where there are a range of existing pressures.

Taking a whole site approach to protection

HPMAs will take a ‘whole site approach’, therefore the whole marine ecosystem within the HPMA boundary will be designated for protection. The proposed protected feature description for pilot HPMAs as will be listed in the designation order is:

‘The marine ecosystem, habitats and species of flora and fauna, abiotic elements, and their supporting ecosystem function and processes, including the seabed, water column and sea surface, within the site boundary.’

The features this candidate site would protect include the types of species and habitats that have been recorded in Lindisfarne candidate HPMA which are listed below. However, this is not an exhaustive list.

This candidate HPMA contains a range of broadscale habitats including blue carbon habitats, together with their associated communities. Features include:

- High energy littoral rock
- Moderate energy littoral rock
- Low energy littoral rock
- Features of littoral rock (rockpools, ephemeral algae & caves / overhangs)
- Littoral coarse sediment
- Littoral sand and muddy sand
- Littoral mud
- Littoral mixed sediments
- Coastal saltmarshes and saline reedbeds
- Littoral sediments dominated by aquatic angiosperms
- Littoral biogenic reefs
- Features of littoral sediment (ephemeral red / green seaweeds)
- High energy infralittoral rock
- Moderate energy infralittoral rock
- Features of infralittoral rock (animal turf in shallow gullies and caves)
- High energy circalittoral rock
- Moderate energy circalittoral rock
- Sublittoral coarse sediment
- Sublittoral sand
- Sublittoral mixed sediments
- Sublittoral macrophyte-dominated sediment

As well as these habitats, a range of species, including birds, marine mammals and multiple species of fish and shellfish are also likely to use this area.

Further details on the specific habitats and species recorded in this candidate HPMA can be found in the ecological narrative located in Annex H.

Conservation objectives

A designation order covering a HPMA will set out the protected features and the conservation objectives applicable within the HPMA site boundary. The proposed conservation objective for all pilot HPMA's, including Lindisfarne is:

“To achieve full natural recovery of the structure and functions, features, qualities and composition of characteristic biological communities present within HPMA's and prevent further degradation and damage to the marine ecosystem subject to natural change.”

Which activities are likely to be affected?

HPMAs will prohibit extractive, destructive, and depositional uses, allowing only non-damaging levels of other activities. Our current understanding about the sectors and activities which are thought to be taking place in the candidate HPMA is based on the best available evidence at the time and therefore may not present a comprehensive view of all activities taking place in this area. We are gathering additional evidence through the consultation to better understand activities in the area and potential impacts of HPMA designation on these and other activities. Specific information gaps have been identified in the Impact Assessment together with additional information on the activities set out below.

Commercial fishing

UK vessels

Our evidence, based on Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) data and sightings data, suggests that the following gears are used within the site:

- Otter trawls (bottom)
- Pots

The VMS data suggests a small annual average number of UK vessels (<5), greater than 12m in length, used this area between 2017 and 2019, mainly harvesting Norway lobster landing mainly at Eyemouth.

Sightings data, used to better understand the under 12m fleet without VMS, indicates annually on average around 40 vessels used this area, mainly harvesting European lobster and edible crab. The main landing ports were Holy Island, Seahouses, Eyemouth and Burnmouth.

Local knowledge suggests trawling for Norway lobster may take place in the northern section of the candidate HPMA, outside of the

existing Berwickshire & North Northumberland Coast Special Area of Conservation (SAC).

A small number of beach trout netting stations are thought to be in place off Goswick. Seasonal hand lining may also be taking place for mackerel, which may contribute to the pot bait supply for commercial vessels in the area.

Commercial hand gathering for periwinkles is also thought to occur on the rocky shore on the northern and eastern intertidal areas of Holy Island, however the boundary of this potential HPMA excludes the Lindisfarne voluntary bait digging zone which is located north and south of the causeway at Fenham Flats.

Non-UK vessels

As Lindisfarne candidate HPMA is completely within 6nm of the English coastline, non-UK vessels are not expected to be fishing in this area.

Displacement of commercial fishing

Based on our understanding of fisheries in this area, the under 12m potting fleet will be most impacted by this candidate HPMA. If displaced, static shellfish gear activity may be able to move to the existing potting areas to the south. This would, however, lead to an increase in fishing pressure in the surrounding MPAs, and the potential to create conflict between fishers in this fleet due to the lack of space to place additional pots.

Existing relevant fisheries management measures

This is not an exhaustive list of fisheries management measures relating to this area, instead it highlights where specific existing restrictions may be relevant to the designation of a pilot HPMA (i.e. existing closed area or prohibition of existing gear types).

- [Seabass commercial fishing restrictions](#) – MMO
- [Prohibition of the use of Mobile Fishing gear within the English section of the Berwickshire and North Northumberland Coast Special Area of Conservation \(SAC\)](#) – NIFCA
- [Seagrass Protection Byelaw within the English section of the Berwickshire and North Northumberland Coast Special Area of Conservation \(SAC\)](#) – NIFCA

Recreational sea fishing

Local knowledge suggests both shore and boat-based angling is a popular activity in this area. A small number of charter angling vessels are thought to operate from Berwick and Seahouses, some of which are also commercial shellfish vessels. It's estimated approximately 20 private fishing vessels operate from Berwick, Holy Island and Seahouses with additional trailer launched vessels in the summer months and additional activity from local campsites.

Shore angling occurs from the beaches within the site targeting flatfish, as well as from any rocky shore for cod, pollock, saithe, wrasse and occasional bass. Recreational fishers have recreational shellfish permits allowing them to set a maximum of five pots targeting mainly lobster.

Significant dive activity also takes place within the site during the summer months which may result in the removal of crab and lobster from the site.

Anchoring

There are no known anchoring areas within the candidate HPMA, however there is some overlap with an area used for general boating, which may mean some recreational anchoring takes place here. The Lindisfarne area is also popular for SCUBA diving and wildlife boating trips, so there is a possibility of anchoring from diving and other vessels taking place, however this is unconfirmed.

Activities which may be taking place at non-damaging levels

Management measures for activities that are not extractive, destructive and depositional, most likely non-licensable and/or recreational, will depend on existing activity in the site and the sensitivity of the species or habitat to activities taking place in that area. Examples of non-licensable activities that may threaten biodiversity include motorised recreation, wildlife watching and land-based recreation. Some of these activities currently occurring in the sites could be damaging to the species and habitats. This consultation will help us improve our evidence about activities occurring in the sites, which will help SNCBs to develop the conservation advice for the sites and enable any necessary management measures to be determined. Management may be voluntary. For example, some activities might benefit from voluntary codes of conduct such as diving (to encourage divers to avoid resting on the seabed, removing species or touching features), dog walking (to avoid disturbing species) or powerboating (to encourage users to reduce their speed).

Additional information

[Link to SNCB ecological advice](#)

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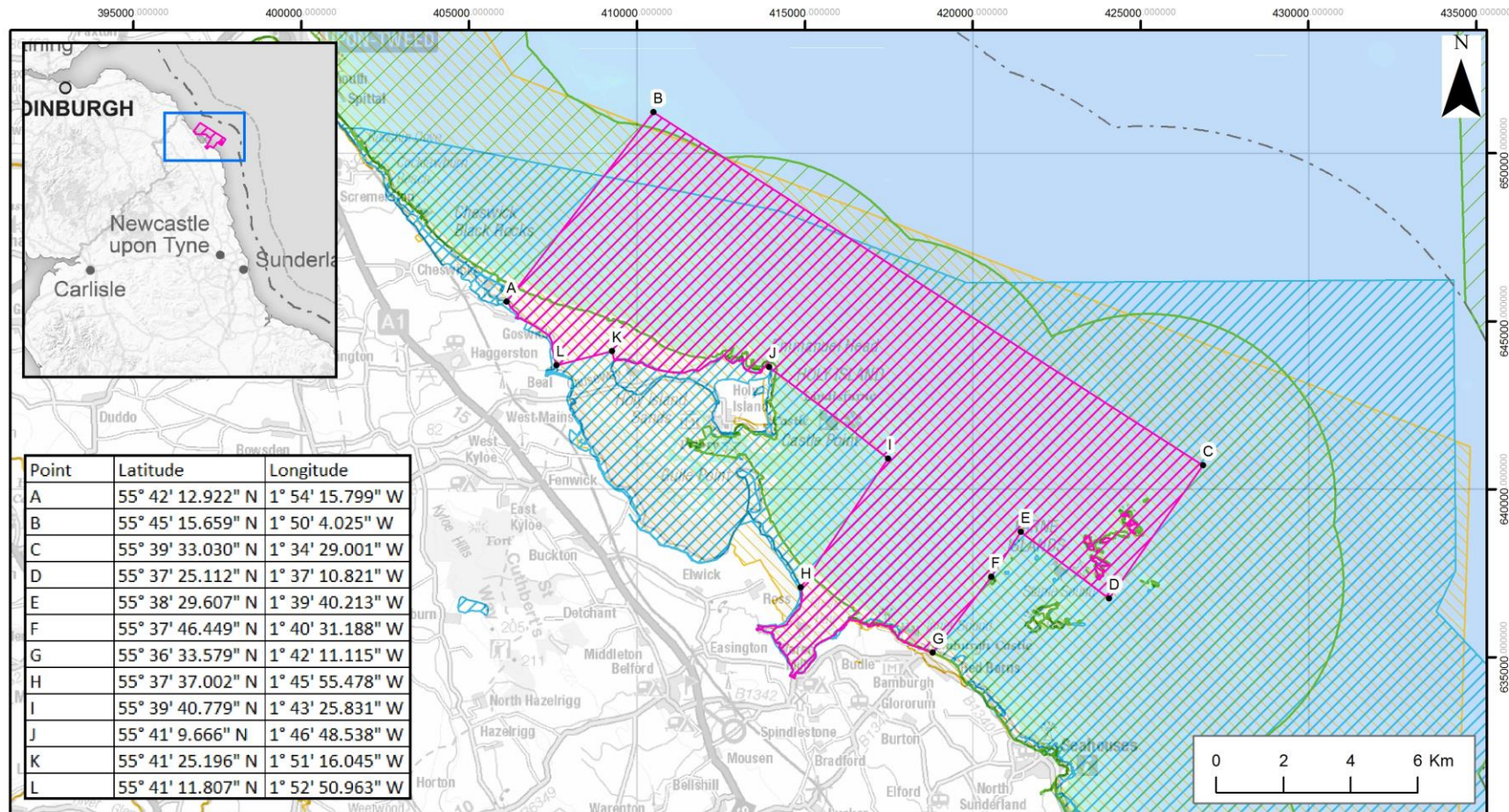
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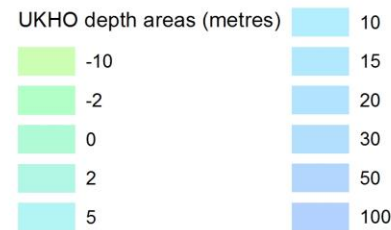
Annex 1: Lindisfarne potential HPMa map with existing MPAs



Candidate HPMa: Lindisfarne

- Candidate HPMa
- Candidate HPMa coordinates
- Marine Conservation Zones
- Special Protection Areas
- Special Areas of Conservation

- 6N limit
- 12N limit



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Map Projection: British National Grid
Boundary Coordinates Projection: WGS84

Annex 2: Designated features of overlapping MPAs

The MPAs which Lindisfarne candidate HPMAs overlap with are designated for the following features:

Northumberland Marine SPA

- A194 Arctic tern (*Sterna paradisaea*) – breeding
- A193 Common tern (*Sterna hirundo*) – breeding
- A199 Guillemot (*Uria aalge*) – breeding
- A195 Little tern (*Sterna albifrons*) – breeding
- A204 Puffin (*Fratercula arctica*) – breeding
- A192 Roseate tern (*Sterna dougalli*) – breeding
- A191 Sandwich tern (*Sterna sandvicensis*) – breeding
- Seabird assemblage

Lindisfarne SPA

- A157 Bar-tailed godwit (*Limosa lapponica*) – non-breeding
- A065 Common scoter (*Melanitta nigra*) – non-breeding
- A672 Dunlin (*Calidris alpina alpina*) – non-breeding
- A063 Eider (*Somateria mollissima*) – non-breeding
- A140 Golden plover (*Pluvialis apricaria*) – non-breeding
- A141 Grey plover, (*Pluvialis squatarola*) – non-breeding
- A043 Greylag goose (*Anser anser*) – non-breeding
- A674-B Light-bellied brent goose, (*Branta bernicla hrota*) – non-breeding
- A195 Little tern (*Sterna albifrons*) – breeding
- A064 Long-tailed duck (*Clangula hyemalis*) – non-breeding
- A069 Red-breasted merganser (*Mergus serrator*) – non-breeding
- A162 Redshank (*Tringa tetanus*) – non-breeding
- A137 Ringed plover (*Charadrius hiaticula*) – non-breeding
- A192 Roseate tern (*Sterna dougalli*) – breeding

- A144 Sanderling (*Calidris alba*) – non-breeding
- A048 Shelduck (*Tadorna tadorna*) – non-breeding
- Waterbird assemblage
- A038-B Whooper swan (*Cygnus cygnus*) – non-breeding
- A050 Wigeon (*Anas penelope*) – non-breeding

Northumbria Coast SPA

- A194 Arctic tern (*Sterna paradisaea*) – breeding
- A195 Little tern (*Sterna albifrons*) – breeding
- A670-A Purple sandpiper (*Calidris maritima*) – non-breeding
- A169 Turnstone (*Arenaria interpres*) – non-breeding

Farne Islands SPA

- A194 Arctic tern (*Sterna paradisaea*) – breeding
- A193 Common tern (*Sterna hirundo*) – breeding
- A199 Guillemot (*Uria aalge*) – breeding
- A192 Roseate tern (*Sterna dougalli*) – breeding
- A191 Sandwich tern (*Sterna sandvicensis*) – breeding
- Seabird assemblage

Berwickshire & North Northumberland Coast Special Area of Conservation (SAC)

- H1140 Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide
- H1160 Large shallow inlets and bays
- H1170 Reefs
- H8330 Submerged or partially submerged sea caves
- S1364 Grey seal, *Halichoerus grypus*

Berwick to St Mary's Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ)

- A063 Eider (*Somateria mollissima*)