



BY EMAIL ONLY

1 February 2021

Dear stakeholder,

### **Formal consultation on a draft MMO byelaw for The Canyons Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ)**

The Marine Management Organisation (MMO) is seeking views on a draft byelaw to manage fishing in The Canyons MCZ.

This letter provides a background to the MCZ and the role of the MMO, a brief summary of known fishing activity in the site, the proposed management measure, supplementary information, and information on how to respond to the formal consultation and what to expect next.

### **Background**

The Canyons MCZ was formally designated on 21 November 2013 with two new features: coral gardens and sea-pen and burrowing megafauna communities; added on 31 May 2019. Following this amendment, the site has four designated features:

- Sea-pen and burrowing megafauna communities
- Coral gardens
- Cold-water coral reefs
- Deep-sea bed

A map showing The Canyons MCZ and the location of the features is provided at the end of this letter.

The conservation objectives for The Canyons MCZ are set out in the site's designation order and are that the habitats:

- so far as already in favourable condition, remain in such condition; and



- so far as not already in favourable condition, be brought into such condition, and remain in such condition.

The Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) advises a general management approach of 'maintain in favourable condition' for the sea-pen and burrowing megafauna communities feature, and 'recover to favourable condition' for the remaining features of The Canyons MCZ.

### **Maritime boundaries**

The Canyons MCZ lies offshore between the 12 and 200 nautical mile (nm) limit. The site shares its northern boundary and a portion of its western boundary with the 200 nm limit.

### **MMO duties and powers**

The MMO has duties under the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 to exercise relevant functions in a manner which best furthers the conservation objectives of the MCZ.

The MMO has powers under the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 to introduce byelaws to manage fishing for the conservation of marine flora, fauna or habitats.

### **Summary of fishing activity within the site**

Analysis of fishing activity data, including vessel monitoring system (VMS) information indicates that the main fishing activities within The Canyons MCZ are from bottom towed gear and demersal long lines, including bottom otter trawls, Danish seines, anchored nets and set longlines. Vessels which fish most frequently within the MCZ include those from the UK, France, Spain, Germany, Ireland and the Netherlands.

### **MMO Assessment**

The MMO assessment of fishing impacts at this site, taking into account advice from JNCC, is that coral gardens, cold-water coral reefs, deep-sea bed and sea-pen and burrowing megafauna communities are sensitive to the impacts of demersal fishing activities including demersal trawls, demersal seines and anchored nets and lines. For these features, the conservation objectives are unlikely to be achieved due to their vulnerability to the demersal and anchored nets and lines fishing activities occurring.

### **Proposed Management**

The proposed management measure in the draft byelaw is a prohibition on all bottom towed fishing gear and anchored nets and lines within a zoned area to protect the coral garden, cold-water coral reef, deep-sea bed, and sea-pen and burrowing megafauna communities features.

This management measure will apply equally to fishing vessels from the UK and from any other country with fishing access rights.

A map showing the proposed management is provided at the end of this letter.

## Documents

All supporting documentation including the draft byelaw, associated regulatory triage assessment, the site's fisheries assessment and all relevant maps can be found [here](#) or via the link within the cover email.

## Questions to consider

Please provide us with any information you feel could be relevant to inform our decision for management at this site. In particular we are interested in understanding the following:

- Do you have any additional information about the location, condition or sensitivity of the designated features?
- Do you have information about the level or nature of fishing activity within the site?
  - What fishing gears are commonly used?
  - How regularly are each of these gears used?
  - What is the approximate size of each of the gears being used?
  - What species do each of these gears target?
  - What species are caught as bycatch by each of these gears?
  - What are the other environmental effects of these gears?
- How would the proposed management option affect you? (Please provide evidence of this impact if possible)
- What other effects will the proposed management option have?

## How to respond

Please respond no later than **28 March 2021**. You can respond by completing our online survey by visiting: <https://consult.defra.gov.uk/mmo/formal-consultation-mmo-mpa-assessments/>

If you are not able to access the above survey, you can respond via the details below. Due to the current COVID-19 situation we are asking all stakeholders to use email rather than post if possible.

Copies of the byelaw may also be inspected at any MMO office. Due to the current COVID-19 situation, please contact MMO using the details below if you wish to inspect a copy of the draft byelaw at an MMO office.

By email: [conservation@marinemanagement.org.uk](mailto:conservation@marinemanagement.org.uk)

By telephone: 0300 123 1032

In writing:

The Canyons MCZ formal consultation  
Marine Conservation Team

Marine Management Organisation  
Lancaster House  
Newcastle upon Tyne  
NE4 7YH

### **Next steps**

We will use the information received during this formal consultation period, alongside other information (including analysis of academic literature, fishing logbook, vessel monitoring system data), to make a decision on the most appropriate fisheries management measure for The Canyons MCZ.

If an MMO byelaw is required, we will finalise the byelaw and submit it the Secretary of State for confirmation.

More information on the MMO byelaw making process can be found at [www.gov.uk/guidance/marine-conservation-byelaws](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/marine-conservation-byelaws)

If you have any further questions or queries, please email [conservation@marinemanagement.org.uk](mailto:conservation@marinemanagement.org.uk) or call the MMO helpline on: 0300 123 1032.

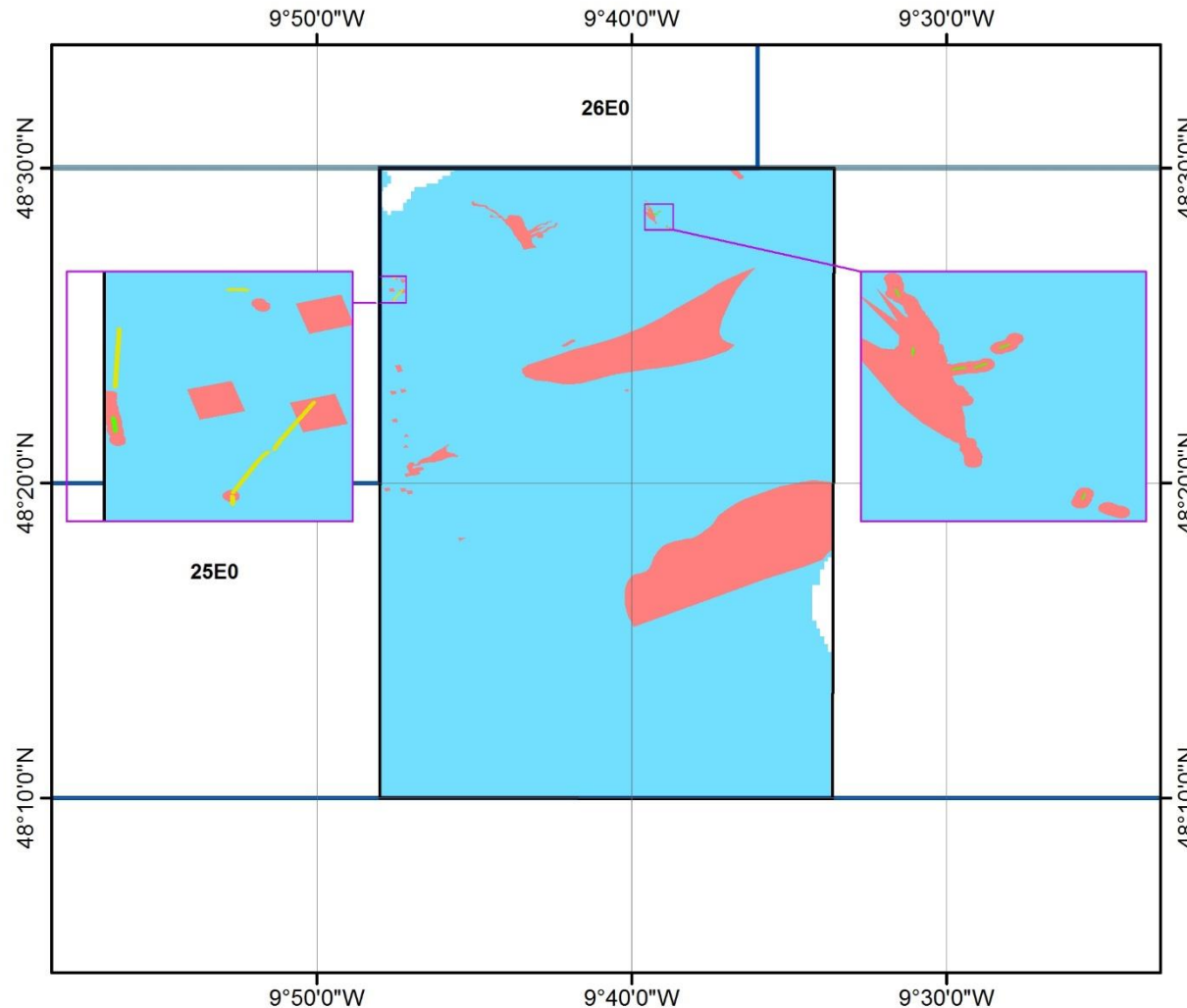
Yours faithfully,

Callum Williams  
Marine Conservation Manager  
Marine Conservation Team  
Marine Management Organisation



Marine  
Management  
Organisation

# The Canyons Marine Conservation Zone Designated Features



- UK EEZ
- ICES Statistical Rectangles
- The Canyons MCZ
- Area to be managed as coral reef
- A6: Deep-sea bed

### Designated Features

- Sea-pen and burrowing megafauna communities with 10 metre margin
- Coral gardens with 4 metre margin

Date: 26/10/2020  
Coordinate System: GCS ETRS 1989  
Datum: ETRS 1989  
Units: Degree

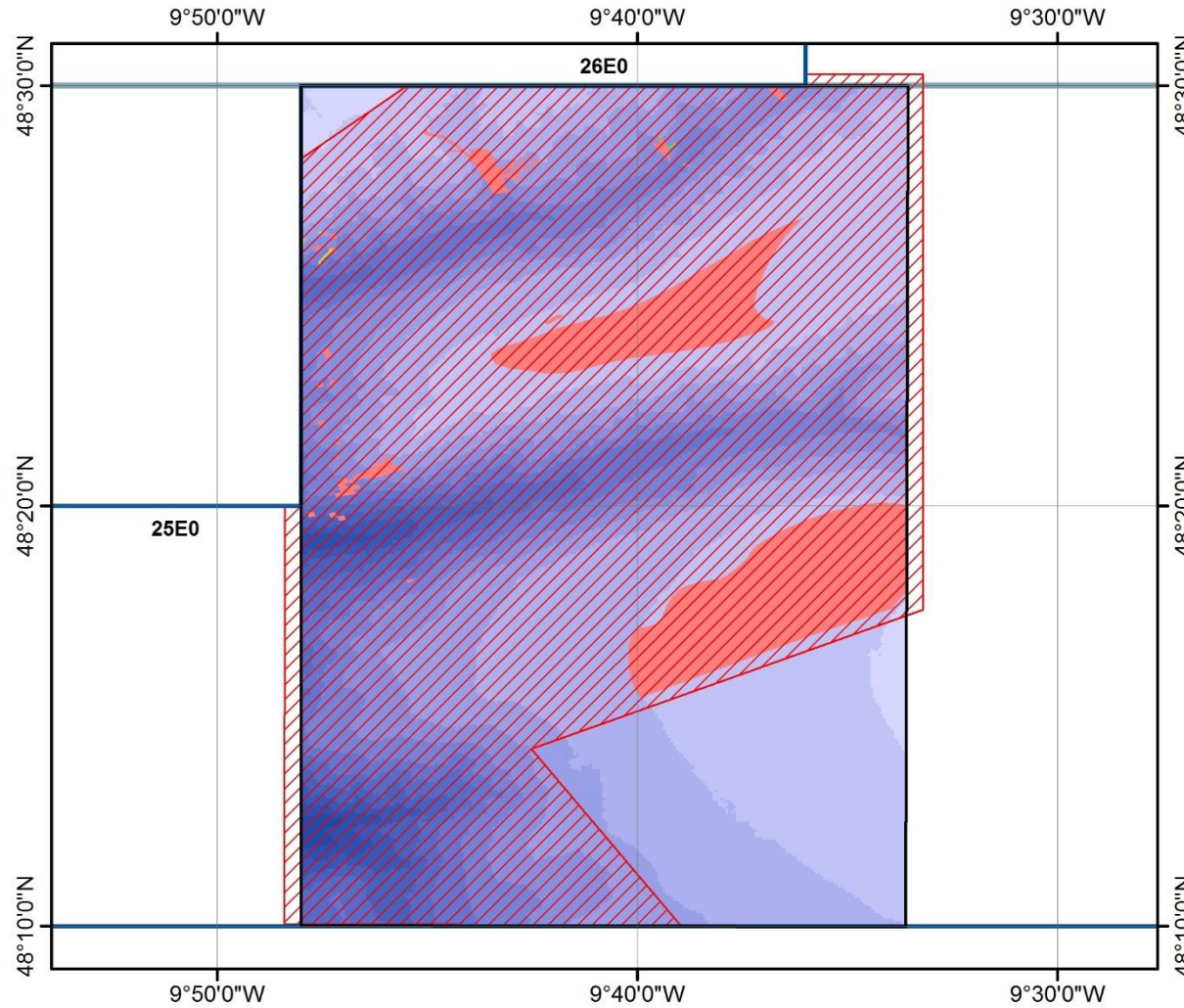


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Marine Management Organisation

# The Canyons Marine Conservation Zone (Specified Area) Prohibited Fishing Gears Byelaw 2021



UK EEZ	Depth (metres)
ICES Statistical Rectangles	< 200
The Canyons MCZ	200 - 400
Proposed closure	400 - 600
	600 - 800
	800 - 1000
	1000 - 1200
Designated Features	1200 - 1400
Sea-pen and burrowing megafauna communities with 10 metre margin	1400 - 1600
Coral gardens with 4 metre margin (east section) and 10 metre margin (west section)	1600 - 1800
	1800 - 2000
	2000 - 2200
	2200 - 2400
Area to be managed as coral reef	

Date: 25/01/2021  
 Coordinate System: GCS WGS 1984  
 Datum: WGS 1984  
 Units: Degree



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