



Marine  
Management  
Organisation

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BY EMAIL ONLY

**5 December 2023**

Dear stakeholder,

**Call for evidence on the impacts of fishing on marine birds and harbour porpoise in English offshore marine protected areas (MPA) – Stage 4**

The Marine Management Organisation (MMO) is launching a call for evidence to support the assessment of fishing in Stage 4 marine protected areas (MPAs). This includes seeking evidence and views on our draft Stage 4 Fishing Gear MPA Impacts Evidence documents, pressures of interest and potential management options.

The Stage 4 Fishing Gear MPA Impacts Evidence documents collate and analyse the best available evidence on the impacts of fishing gears on marine birds and harbour porpoise MPA features. These will inform site-level assessments of the impact of fishing on marine birds and harbour porpoise MPA features as part of Stage 4 of the MMO's work to manage fishing in offshore MPAs.

Through drafting the Impacts Evidence documents, pressures of interest from certain fishing activities in harbour porpoise and marine bird MPAs have been identified. A number of potential management options for the identified pressures of interest are also set out.

The locations of Stage 4 MPAs are displayed in a map at the end of this letter. You can find details of the sites and designated features within the Stage 4 Call for Evidence Introduction.



## Documents

All documents referred to in this letter can be found online:

<https://consult.defra.gov.uk/mmo/stage-4-call-for-evidence>

## Questions to consider

Please provide us with any information you feel could be relevant to inform our assessment and decision for management in these sites.

### Topic 1: Fishing gear impacts evidence

To inform our assessment and management of fishing impacts for Stage 4, we have gathered and analysed the best available evidence on fishing impacts. This information has been captured in two draft 'Stage 4 Fishing Gear MPA Impacts Evidence' documents, one for each MPA feature: marine birds and harbour porpoise.

- Do you have any additional evidence about the interactions between fishing and harbour porpoise or marine birds?
- Do you have any comments on the evidence and analysis currently included in the Harbour Porpoise or Marine Birds Impacts Evidence documents?

### Topic 2: Pressures of interest

Through drafting the Impacts Evidence documents, pressures of interest caused by certain fishing activities in harbour porpoise and marine bird MPAs have been identified.

- Do you have any evidence for any of the listed pressures in relation to fishing in Southern North Sea MPA?
- Do you have any evidence for any of the listed pressures in relation to fishing in Bristol Channel Approaches MPA?
- Do you have any evidence for any of the listed pressures in relation to fishing in Greater Wash MPA?
- Do you have any evidence for any of the listed pressures in relation to fishing in Liverpool Bay MPA?
- Do you have any evidence for any of the listed pressures in relation to fishing in Outer Thames Estuary MPA?

### Topic 3: Potential management options

MMO has set out potential management options for the pressures of interest identified.

- Are you aware of any other management options for any of the pressures?
- Do you have examples of any of the management options being used?



- Do you have any evidence on the effectiveness of any of the management options?

## How to respond

Please respond no later than **13 February 2024**. You can respond by completing our online survey by visiting: <https://consult.defra.gov.uk/mmo/stage-4-call-for-evidence>

If you are not able to access the above survey, you can respond via the details below.

We are asking all stakeholders not completing the online survey to use email rather than post if possible. However, if you are only able to respond via email or post, please set out your response following the questions above.

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

By telephone: 0300 123 1032

In writing:

Stage 4 Call for Evidence  
Marine Conservation Team  
Marine Management Organisation  
Lancaster House  
Newcastle upon Tyne  
NE4 7YH

## Next steps

We will review the information received during this call for evidence to update and finalise the Stage 4 Fishing Gear MPA Impacts Evidence documents and inform our understanding of the pressures of interest and potential management options. The Fishing Gear MPA Impacts Evidence documents will be used to inform site-level assessments of the impacts of fishing on highly mobile species in each MPA, which will in turn inform the development of any appropriate fisheries management measures for these MPAs. If management measures are required, these will be subject to appropriate levels of consultation.

Further information on the MMO's Stage 4 call for evidence is available at:

[www.gov.uk/marine-protected-areas](http://www.gov.uk/marine-protected-areas)

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,

Nicholas Greenwood



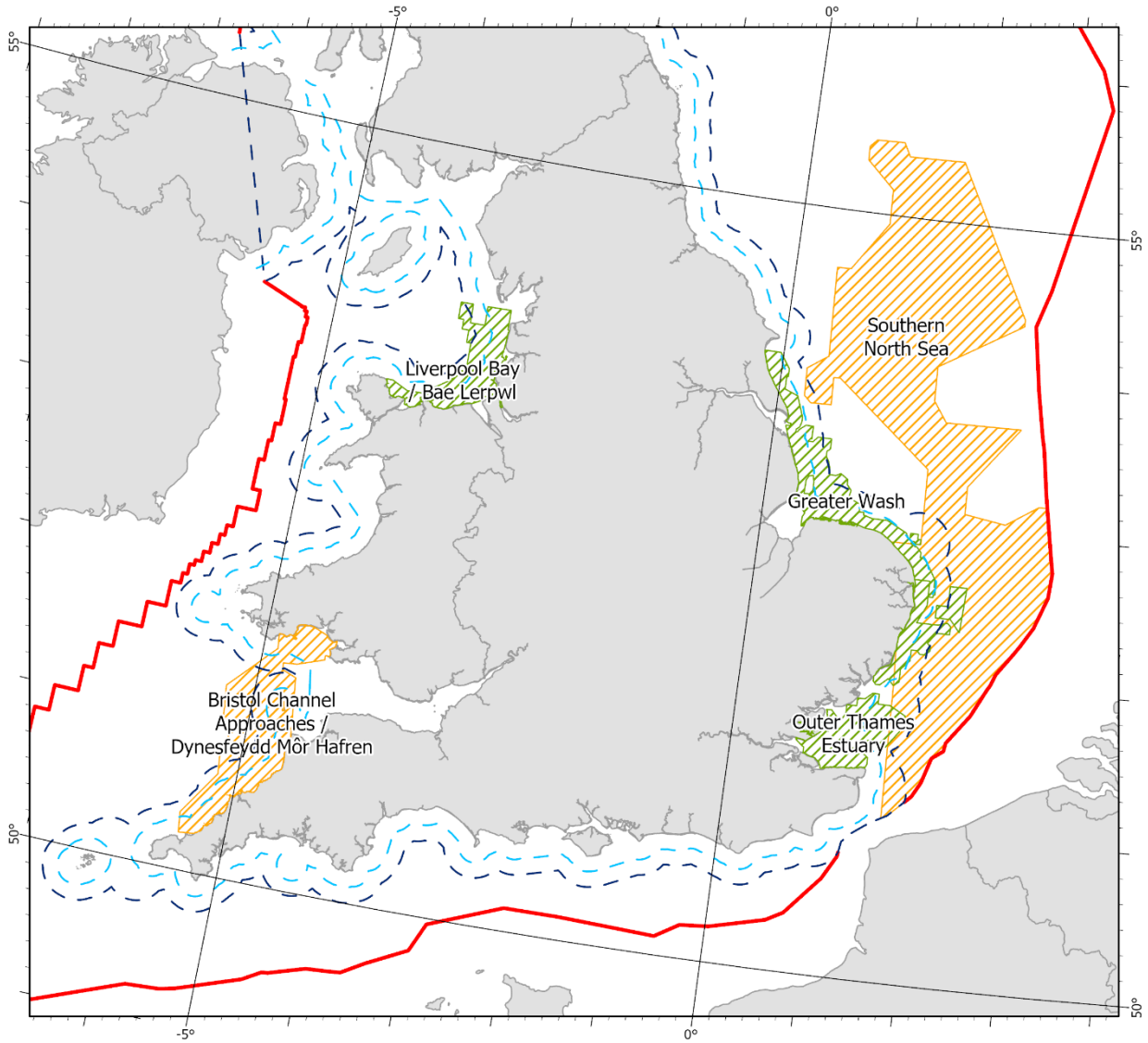
Head of Marine Conservation

Marine Conservation Team  
Marine Management Organisation





# Stage 4 Marine Protected Areas



- 6 Nautical Mile Limit, 1983 baseline (UKHO)
- UK Territorial Sea Limits
- UK Exclusive Economic Zone (2013)
- ▨ Special Protection Areas
- ▨ Special Areas of Conservation



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