

Devon & Severn IFCA

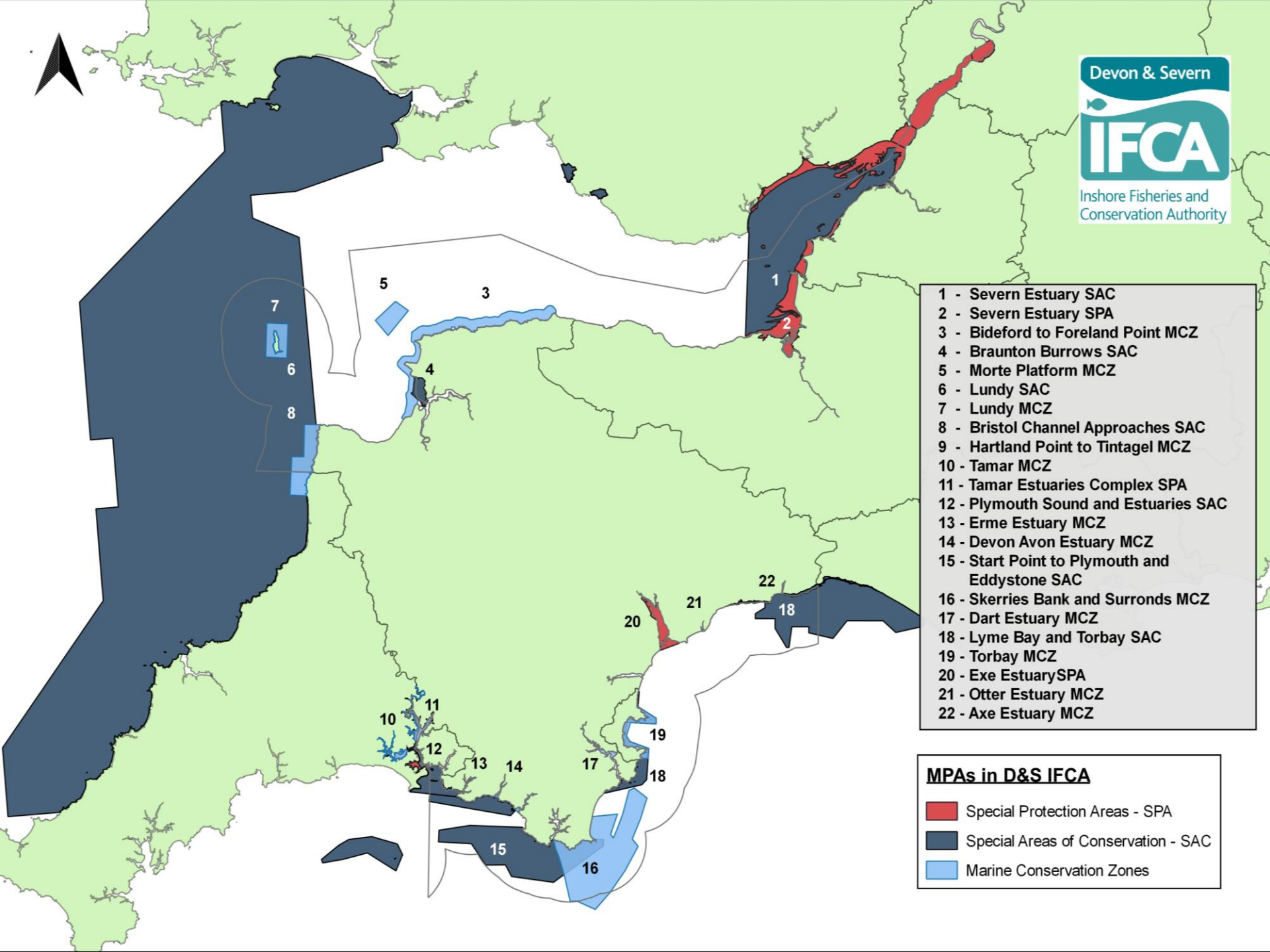


Marine Protected Areas

Sarah Clark
Deputy Chief Officer

What is a Marine Protected Area?

Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) are areas of sea, coast or transitional waters, such as estuaries, which are designated under legislation to protect certain habitats and species (features) that exist within those areas. It is a term used across the globe to describe "any area of intertidal or subtidal terrain, together with its overlying water and associated flora, fauna, historical and cultural features, which has been reserved by law or other effective means to protect part or all of the enclosed environment" (Kelleher and Kenchington, 1992).



- 1 - Severn Estuary SAC
- 2 - Severn Estuary SPA
- 3 - Bideford to Foreland Point MCZ
- 4 - Braunton Burrows SAC
- 5 - Morte Platform MCZ
- 6 - Lundy SAC
- 7 - Lundy MCZ
- 8 - Bristol Channel Approaches SAC
- 9 - Hartland Point to Tintagel MCZ
- 10 - Tamar MCZ
- 11 - Tamar Estuaries Complex SPA
- 12 - Plymouth Sound and Estuaries SAC
- 13 - Erme Estuary MCZ
- 14 - Devon Avon Estuary MCZ
- 15 - Start Point to Plymouth and Eddystone SAC
- 16 - Skerries Bank and Surrounds MCZ
- 17 - Dart Estuary MCZ
- 18 - Lyme Bay and Torbay SAC
- 19 - Torbay MCZ
- 20 - Exe Estuary SPA
- 21 - Otter Estuary MCZ
- 22 - Axe Estuary MCZ

MPAs in D&S IFCA

- Special Protection Areas - SPA
- Special Areas of Conservation - SAC
- Marine Conservation Zones

Types of Marine Protected Area

There are several types of MPAs:

- **Marine Conservation Zones (MCZ)**

- Designated under Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009
- protect a range of nationally important marine wildlife, habitats, geology and geomorphology in English inshore waters and offshore water off England, Wales and Northern Ireland.
- They are designated to form part of an ecologically coherent network of MPAs alongside European Marine Sites (EMS) and Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs).
- Three Tranches of MCZs have been designated since 2013. In D&S IFCA District there are 12 MCZs:
 - Tranche 1 – *Lundy; Torbay; Skerries Bank and Surrounds; Tamar Estuary*
 - Tranche 2 – *Bideford to Foreland Point; Hartland Point to Tintagel*
 - Tranche 3 – *Dart Estuary; Devon Avon Estuary; Erme Estuary; Otter Estuary; Axe Estuary; Morte Platform*

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Types of Marine Protected Area

- **European Marine Sites (EMS)**

- Designated under the European Legislation (Birds and Habitats Directives) and transposed in UK legislation under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended)
- They consist of
 - Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) – designated for habitats and species. These include animals, plants and habitats that are considered special or threatened in Europe.
 - Special Protection Areas (SPA)- designated for the protection of internationally and nationally important, rare, vulnerable, or regularly occurring migratory birds and their supporting habitats.
- There are 10 EMS in D&S IFCA's District:
 - Northern district – *Severn Estuary SPA and SAC; Lundy SAC Braunton Burrows SAC; Bristol Channel and Approaches SAC*
 - Southern District – *Plymouth Sound and Estuaries SAC; Tamar Estuaries Complex SPA; Start Point to Plymouth Sound and Eddystone SAC; Lyme Bay and Torbay SAC; Exe Estuary SPA*

Types of Marine Protected Area

- **Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)**

- They are MPAs where they protect intertidal and subtidal habitats and species although they normally do not protect marine wildlife below the low water mark. In D&S IFCA's District one site that is a fully marine SSSI is the Salcombe to Kingsbridge Estuary
- SSSI are designated in England, Scotland and Wales to protect species, habitats and geological features of national importance.
- SSSI are notified and managed under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)

- **Marine Nature Reserves (MNR)**

- Marine Nature Reserves were designated under the same legislation as SSSIs. Some have become MCZs such as Lundy – the UK's first MCZ in 2013

- **No Take Zones**

- Lundy was England's first No Take Zone – managed under D&S IFCA's Byelaws.

Types of Marine Protected Area

- **Highly Protected Marine Areas (HPMA)**

- These were recommended under the Benyon Review in 2019-2020
- HPMAs are areas of the sea (including the shoreline) that allow the protection and full recovery of marine ecosystems, to a more natural state, allowing the ecosystem to thrive.
- HPMAs will protect all species and habitats and associated ecosystem processes within the site boundary, including the seabed and water column.
- Defra has consulted on 5 candidate sites which ended on 28th September 2022:

Inshore

- Allonby Bay (Irish Sea)
- Lindisfarne (northern North Sea)

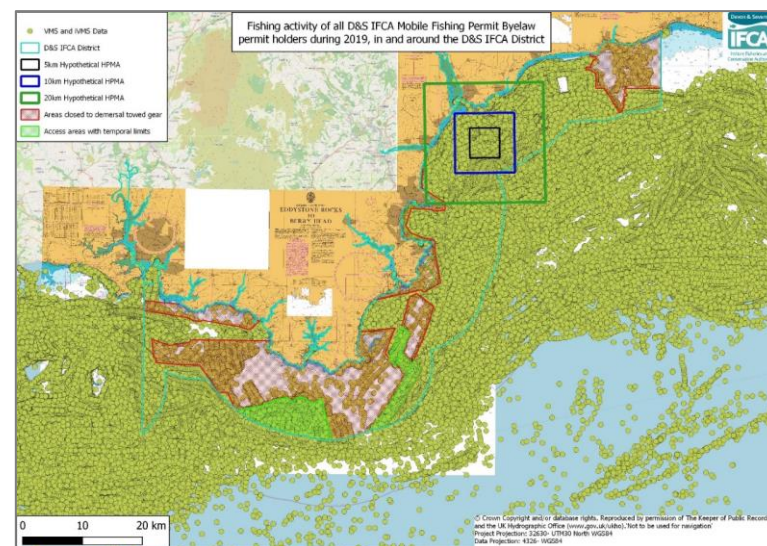
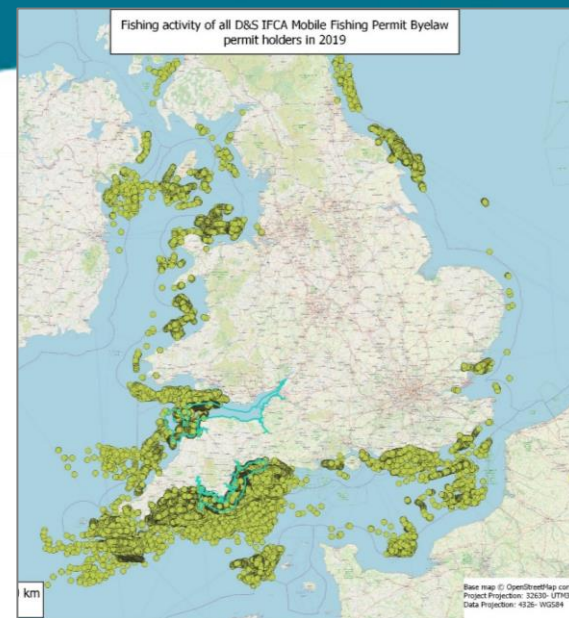
Offshore

- Dolphin Head (Eastern Channel)
- Inner Silver Pit South (southern North Sea)
- north-east of Farnes Deep (northern North Sea).



Types of Marine Protected Area

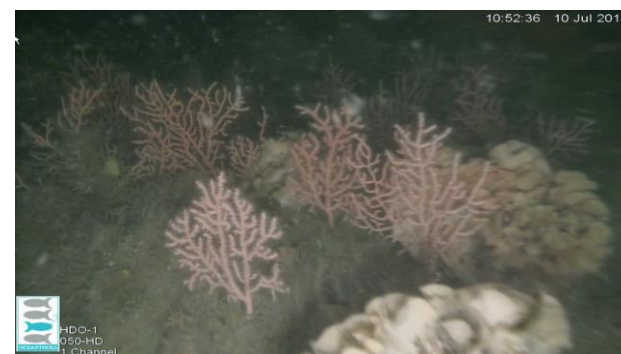
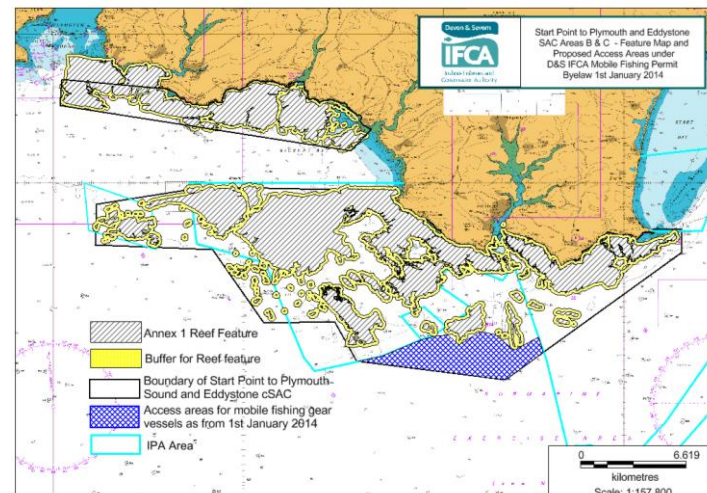
- **Highly Protected Marine Areas (HPMA)**
- HPMA's will be designated as MCZs under MaCAA 2009
- Depending on the location, the MMO or IFCA's will manage HPMA's
- All extractive, destructive and depositional activities will be prohibited including:
 - commercial and recreational fishing
 - dredging
 - construction
 - anchoring
- Defra will consider the response to the consultation and Ministers will designate pilot HPMA's in 2023
- D&S IFCA was involved in a hypothetical HPMA project – using IVMS to assess the potential economic impact and displacement of vessels
- MPAs are not No Take Zones or HPMA's unless designated as such



Approaches to Management of MPAs

Feature Based:

- Defra's Revised Approach to commercial fishing activities in MPAs was published in 2012
- A feature based approach where commercial fishing activities taking place in EMS and MCZ are assessed on their interaction with designated features (habitats and species).
- This is still the current approach to manage fishing activities in MPAs.
- The interactions of bottom towed (demersal) fishing gear on the most sensitive habitats were classed as **red risk** and the activities had to be prohibited to protect the feature e.g. scalloping on reef, trawling on seagrass.
- Most other interactions were classed as **amber risk** – such as trawling on sediments, potting on reef and require MPA assessments to be undertaken to determine if the activity will impact the MPAs' integrity and conservation objectives
- Other interactions were classed as **blue risk** and were screened out as they interaction was not likely to take place e.g. hand gathering on reef.



Approaches to Management of MPAs

Feature Based:

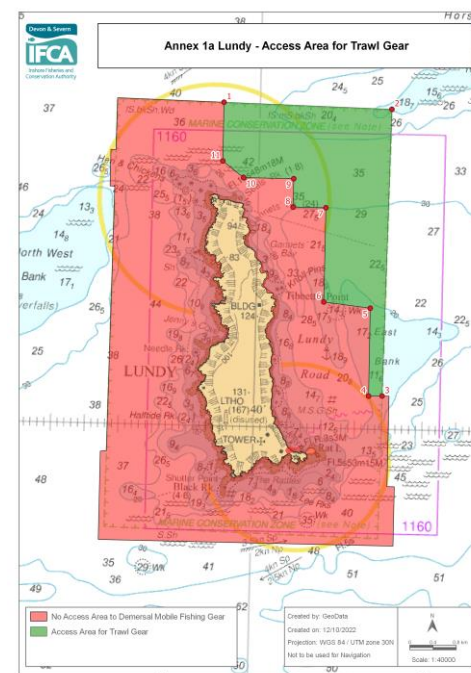
- D&S IFCA has undertaken research to gather evidence on the location and extent of sensitive habitats and the levels of fishing activity.
- This evidence has been used to complete MPA Assessments for all its sites in the District
- To date 302 MPA assessments have been undertaken for 2927 gear – feature interactions.
- Results of these assessments inform the B&PSC on potential management measures, in particular on bottom towed fishing gear



Approaches to Management of MPAs

Feature Based:

- D&S IFCA has introduced over 58 management measures through its Permitting Byelaws and Conditions many of which have been to protect features of MPAs.
- 42% of D&S IFCA's District is covered by MPAs (incl. BCA SAC)
- Over 40% of the South of D&S IFCA's District is closed to demersal mobile fishing gear to protect sensitive features
- Within MPAs in the D&S IFCA's District almost 60% of the area is closed to demersal mobile fishing gear.
- Within some areas within MPAs access to demersal mobile fishing gear continues as the interaction of this gear type has been assessed as unlikely to have a significant impact of the features e.g. trawling on sand. D&S IFCA Mobile Fishing permit conditions reflect this.
- The introduction of IVMS on demersal mobile fishing vessels has been important in effective management, monitoring and enforcement of MPAs in the District.



Approaches to Management of MPAs

Whole Site Approach

- The Whole Site Approach was highlighted in the UK Government's 25 Year Environment Plan: 'we will move to a Whole Site Approach to protect site of greatest biodiversity interest'.
- Defra has not reviewed its current feature based approach to fisheries management in MPAs to introduce the Whole Site Approach
- IFCAs and the MMO are continuing to manage through the feature based approach assessing the appropriateness of fishing activities in MPAs
- The Whole Site Approach is seen by many as the total removal of demersal fishing gear but other activities continuing
- HPMAs will fulfil the Whole Site Approach by removing all destructive and extractive activities to protect the biodiversity and allow its recovery
- Research by Plymouth University has highlighted the importance of protecting habitats in MPAs and also investigate the importance of habitats that are not designated which lie within the MPAs, that provide ecosystem services.
- Work in Lyme Bay MPA has highlighted an increase in reef species, species diversity and fish species. Within this site mobile gear is prohibited but static gear activities continue.

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D&S IFCA Management in MPAs

- D&S IFCA has the largest mobile fishing (trawling and scalloping) fleet operating in its District.
- Designation of an MPAs does not afford immediate protection
- Management introduced is appropriate to the site and the interaction of gears with the features, as assessed
- Mobile Fishing Permit Conditions prohibit demersal fishing gear from larger areas within MPAs in the District
- These are reviewed when there are national drivers to management of MPAs, new sites and habitats designated or new evidence
- IVMS on demersal fishing vessels was introduced to support the protection the MPAs through effective monitoring and enforcement
- Without the enforcement of management measures MPAs would be paper parks
- Remote electronic monitoring technology will help to further monitor demersal mobile fishing activity and ensure on-going protection of designated habitats and species.

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