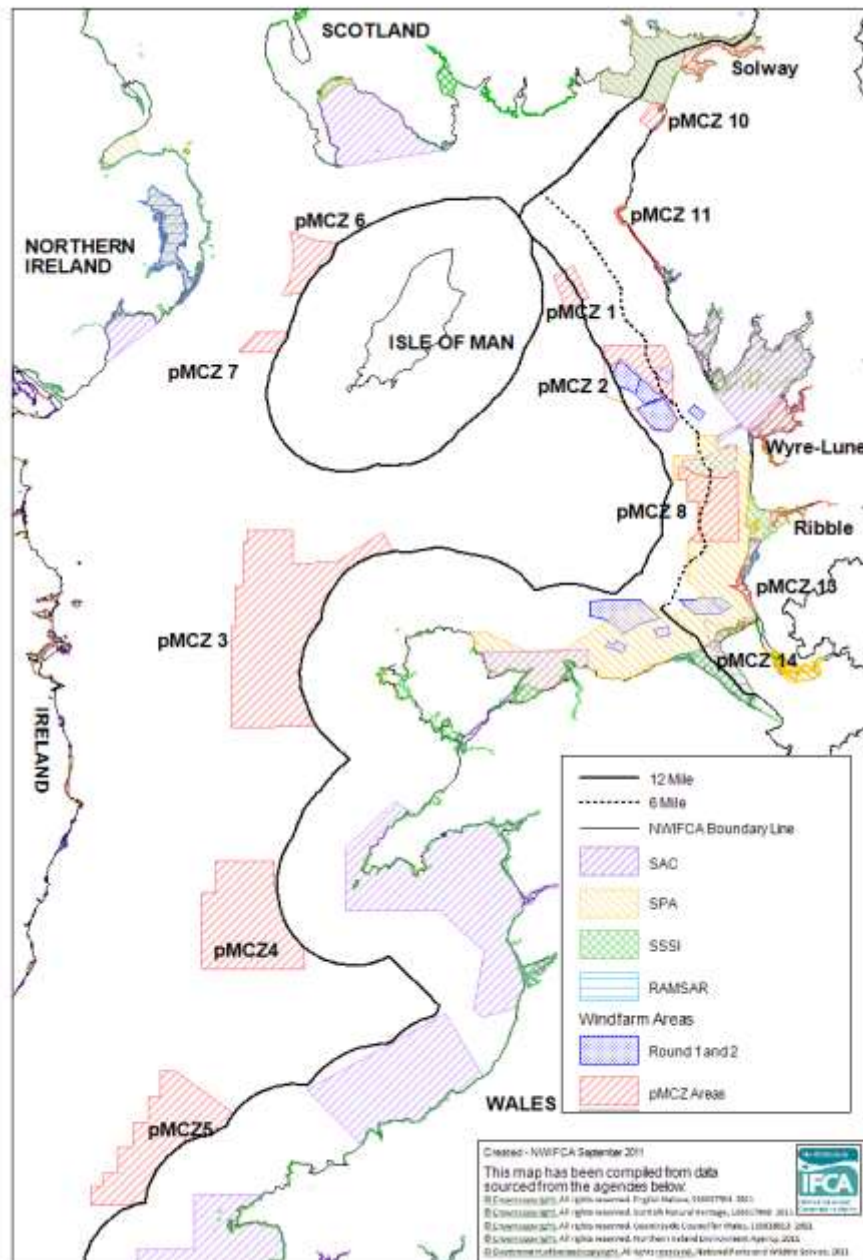


NORTH WEST OF ENGLAND'S MARINE PROTECTED AREAS



Map of Irish Sea Marine Protected Areas and Proposed Marine Conservation Zones from the Irish Sea Conservation Zone Project

Marine Protected Designations

Within the UK there are 4 major conservation designations -

Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) – Designated sites under the EC Habitats Directive under Annex 1 – Habitats and Annex 2 - Species

Special Protected Areas (SPA) - Designated sites under EC Birds Directive at a species level for both breeding and over wintering birds.

RAMSAR - Designated sites under the Convention of Wetlands of International Importance 1971, protecting sites which are a important to water birds.

European Marine Sites are the collective term for a site which is designated as one or both of the following designations SPA and SAC.

Sites of Special Scientific Interest – Notified and managed under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. They generally do not cover below mean low water and as such have limited protection for Marine life. There are 19 SSSI's with marine/coastal elements across the district.

In addition to the designation mentioned above there are several Local and National Nature Reserves within the Authority (Annex 1) which have marine components.

The sites protect a variety of species and habitats across the district and in the major estuaries (Solway Firth, Morecambe Bay, Ribble, Mersey and Ribble there are all 2 or more of the major conservation designations.

NWIFCA is recognised under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 as a competent authority. If the authority receives a request for what is considered a 'plan or project' within a European Marine Site and it is believed it will have a likely significant effect to the European Marine Site, an appropriate assessment must be undertaken. These are completed with consultation from Natural England.

Marine Conservation Zones

The final recommendations of Marine Conservation Zones were submitted to the science advisory panel on the 31st August 2011. 15 proposed MCZ have been established as well as 14 Reference Areas, 5 of which lie outside of a pMCZ. The pMCZ will be submitted to the Government next year following further input from JNCC and Natural England. Full details of the proposed sites can be requested or downloaded from:- www.irishseaconservation.org.uk/MCZ-recommendations

Proposed New Conservation Designations

NWIFCA received notification from Natural England that Mersey Narrows and North Wirral Foreshore has been put forward to be designated under RAMSAR and as a SPA area.

Maps below show the Wirral and both current conservation designations within the area and the proposed new RAMSAR and SPA site. Annex 1 and 2 provides information on the proposed designations.

Science and IFCA Officer
5 October 2011