

2006 Report on the Status of the OSPAR Network of Marine Protected Areas



**OSPAR Commission
2007**

The Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic (the “OSPAR Convention”) was opened for signature at the Ministerial Meeting of the former Oslo and Paris Commissions in Paris on 22 September 1992. The Convention entered into force on 25 March 1998. It has been ratified by Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom and approved by the European Community and Spain.

La Convention pour la protection du milieu marin de l'Atlantique du Nord-Est, dite Convention OSPAR, a été ouverte à la signature à la réunion ministérielle des anciennes Commissions d'Oslo et de Paris, à Paris le 22 septembre 1992. La Convention est entrée en vigueur le 25 mars 1998. La Convention a été ratifiée par l'Allemagne, la Belgique, le Danemark, la Finlande, la France, l'Irlande, l'Islande, le Luxembourg, la Norvège, les Pays-Bas, le Portugal, le Royaume-Uni de Grande Bretagne et d'Irlande du Nord, la Suède et la Suisse et approuvée par la Communauté européenne et l'Espagne.

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contents

Executive Summary/ Récapitulatif	4
Background	5
Overview of the OSPAR Network of MPAs	6
Reporting of new MPAs (10 April 2006-31 December 2006)	6
MPAs reported previously (2005-10 April 2006)	6
Future progress on identification and selection of MPAs	7
OSPAR-wide overview of current MPA network	8
Conclusions	12
Annex 1: Map of sites reported as components of the OSPAR network of MPAs (as of 31 December 2006) and temporary NEAFC fisheries closures	15
Annex 2: Summary of reported OSPAR MPAs (as of 31 December 2006)	16

Executive Summary/Récapitulatif

In the 2003 Bremen ministerial statement OSPAR agreed to identify a first set of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) by 2006, establish what gaps then remain and complete by 2010 a joint network of well-managed marine protected areas that, together with the Natura 2000 network, is ecologically coherent. For this purpose OSPAR 2003 adopted Recommendation 2003/3 on a network of Marine Protected Areas which has the aim of establishing the OSPAR Network of Marine Protected Areas and ensuring that by 2010 it is both ecologically coherent and well-managed.

Dans la déclaration ministérielle de Brème de 2003 OSPAR est convenue de définir un premier groupe de zones marines protégées (ZMP), en 2006 au plus tard, de déterminer les lacunes qui subsistent alors et de parachever, en 2010 au plus tard, un réseau commun de ZMP bien géré qui, avec le réseau de Natura 2000, soit écologiquement cohérent. A cette fin, OSPAR 2003 a adopté la Recommandation 2003/3 concernant un réseau de zones marines protégées dont l'objectif est de créer un réseau OSPAR de zones marines protégées et de s'assurer que, en 2010 au plus tard, il s'agisse d'un réseau écologiquement cohérent et bien géré.

This report, which has been prepared during the first half of 2007, presents the second evaluation of the status of the OSPAR network of MPAs reflecting the progress made up to end of 2006. Up to this point 6 Contracting Parties (France, Germany, Norway, Portugal, Sweden and the UK) had reported on the selection of 87 MPAs as components of the network.

Le présent rapport, qui a été préparé durant le premier semestre de 2007, présente la deuxième évaluation de l'état du réseau de ZMP d'OSPAR et fait état des progrès accomplis jusqu'à la fin de 2006. Jusqu'à ce jour, 6 Parties contractantes (Allemagne, France, Norvège, Portugal, Royaume-Uni et Suède) ont soumis des rapports sur 87 ZMP sélectionnées en tant qu'éléments du réseau.

Although the sites selected so far provide a good basis for the network, most of the sites reported by EU member states are either wholly or partially Natura 2000 sites, although Portugal have selected three non-Natura 2000 sites. The majority of sites reported so far are in the nearshore zone with only Germany Norway and Portugal reporting sites within their Exclusive Economic Zones. Only Portugal has selected a site on the continental shelf beyond the EEZ. No proposals have been received so far for MPAs in areas beyond national jurisdiction.

Bien que les sites sélectionnés jusqu'à présent constituent une bonne base pour le réseau, la plupart des sites qui font l'objet d'une notification de la part des états membres de l'UE sont soit totalement soit partiellement des sites Natura 2000. Toutefois, le Portugal a sélectionné trois sites qui ne sont pas des sites Natura 2000. La plupart des sites notifiés jusqu'à présent se trouvent dans la zone côtière. Seuls l'Allemagne, la Norvège et le Portugal notifient des sites dans leurs zones économiques exclusives et seul le Portugal a sélectionné un site du plateau continental au-delà des zones économiques exclusives. Jusqu'à présent, aucune ZMP située au-delà des juridictions nationales n'a été proposée.

Identification and selection of further sites is therefore necessary before the network can be considered as having met the aims of being ecologically coherent and well managed. OSPAR has therefore agreed that to monitor progress further annual reports on the status of the OSPAR network of MPAs should be prepared in the period up to 2010.

Il est donc nécessaire de déterminer et de sélectionner des sites supplémentaires avant de considérer que le réseau a atteint son objectif, à savoir être un réseau écologiquement cohérent et bien géré. OSPAR est donc convenue que de nouveaux rapports annuels sur l'état du réseau de ZMP d'OSPAR devront être préparés avant 2010 afin de surveiller les progrès accomplis.

Background

In the 2003 Bremen ministerial statement OSPAR agreed, through working with HELCOM and the European Community, to identify the first set of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) by 2006, establish what gaps then remain and complete by 2010 a joint network of well-managed marine protected areas that, together with the NATURA 2000 network, is ecologically coherent. Accordingly OSPAR 2003 adopted Recommendation 2003/3 with the purpose of establishing the OSPAR Network of Marine Protected Areas and ensuring that by 2010 it is an ecologically coherent network of well managed marine protected areas.

Recommendation 2003/3 on a Network of Marine Protected Areas, which sets out that each Contracting Party that is a coastal state of the OSPAR maritime area should:

- a. consider whether any areas within its jurisdiction justify selection as marine protected areas under the criteria set out in the OSPAR Guidelines for the Identification and Selection of Marine Protected Areas in the OSPAR Maritime Area (OSPAR agreement 2003-17) and, if so,
- b. report to the OSPAR Commission the areas that it has selected as components of the OSPAR Network of Marine Protected Areas;
- c. develop for each area selected a management plan, in accordance with the OSPAR Guidelines for the Management of Marine Protected Areas in the OSPAR Maritime Area (OSPAR agreement 2003-18), to achieve the aims for which the area has been selected.

Under the OSPAR Biodiversity Strategy OSPAR has also agreed to consider reports and assessments from Contracting Parties and observers on possible components of the OSPAR network and on the need for protection of the biodiversity and ecosystems in the maritime area outside the jurisdiction of the Contracting Parties, in order to achieve the purposes of the network.

In 2006 OSPAR published a first report on the status of the OSPAR Network of Marine Protected Areas (OSPAR Publication no: 268), which reported on the selection of 81 MPAs by France, Germany, Norway, Portugal, Sweden and the UK. In publishing the first report OSPAR welcomed the steps taken so far by Contracting Parties to establish the OSPAR network of MPAs, and endorsed the following recommendations:

- a. that Contracting Parties should prioritise the work on identification and selection of OSPAR MPAs and endeavour to develop clear timelines for their reports of MPAs;
- b. to achieve the aims set out for the OSPAR network of MPAs in Recommendation 2003/3:
 - (i) the size of the OSPAR network of MPAs needs to be increased substantially;
 - (ii) sites further offshore and especially in the Contracting Parties' EEZs should be selected;
 - (iii) to fully address the OSPAR selection criteria for MPAs Contracting Parties should begin the process of identifying and selecting sites beyond existing Natura 2000 areas;
 - (iv) OSPAR should intensify its efforts to identify sites in need of protection in areas beyond national jurisdiction.

This second status report follows up the agreement at the 2006 meeting of the OSPAR Biodiversity Committee (BDC) that further annual reports on the status of the OSPAR network of MPAs should be prepared in the period up to 2010. It provides an updated assessment of the status of the OSPAR network taking into account those MPAs that OSPAR Contracting Parties have reported to the OSPAR Commission as having been selected as components of the network up to 31 December 2006. A first draft of this report was prepared by Germany as lead country

within OSPAR for the work on MPAs. This was considered at a meeting of an intersessional correspondence group on MPAs in February 2007, approved at the 2007 meeting of the OSPAR Biodiversity Committee (BDC), and approved at the 2007 OSPAR Commission meeting.

Overview of the OSPAR Network of MPAs

A map showing all MPAs reported by Contracting Parties, new and previous, is provided as Annex 1 of this document, and a full listing is given in Annex 2.

Reporting of new MPAs (10 April 2006 - 31 December 2006)

During the most recent reporting period, Portugal reported six additional areas as components of the OSPAR network of MPAs. These six new MPAs increase the total number of OSPAR MPAs to 87, and the total network area¹ has increased from 25 426 km² to 26 619 km².

The six new Portuguese nominations are in the waters surrounding the Azores, of which two sites (Faial-Pico channel, Corvo Island) are in territorial waters, three in the EEZ (D. João de Castro seamount, Lucky Strike hydrothermal vent field, Menez Gwen hydrothermal vent field), and one on the extended continental shelf (Rainbow hydrothermal vent field). This amounts to 49 742 ha in territorial waters, 64 088 ha in Portugal's EEZ, and 2215 ha on the extended continental shelf, totalling 116 045 ha (1160 sq km). The grand total of all Portugal's sites (which are all in the Azores) including last year's nomination amounts to 1160 (2006) + 525 (2005) = 1686 sq km (see [Table 1](#), below). Only Portugal has made a continental shelf nomination beyond the EEZ.

Of the EU Member States, only Portugal / The Azores has nominated sites that are not wholly Natura 2000 sites, which is an important development. Of the seven Portuguese sites, three are not Natura 2000 at all, and the remaining four are larger and more extensive than the smaller Natura sites contained within them. This approach could be seriously considered by other Contracting Parties that are EU Member States.

It should be noted that due to the extension of last year's reporting deadline, most of the MPAs in last year's report were actually put forward in the period between January and April 2006. This means that this report covers a short reporting period (i.e. less than a calendar year).

MPAs reported previously (2005 - 10 April 2006)

The following Contracting Parties have previously reported areas as components of the OSPAR network of MPAs: France, Germany, Norway, Portugal, Sweden, and UK. A map of all sites included in the OSPAR network of MPAs (as 31 December 2006) is provided as Annex 1 of this document, and a full listing is given in Annex 2. The sites previously reported are summarized below in the order they were received.

Portugal: One site, Formigas/Dollabarát bank, within the waters of the Azores, was reported in 2005. It was the first OSPAR MPA nomination. It is a nature reserve with a delimited area of 52 527 hectares, extending to below 1500 metres in depth. Of that, 3 628 ha is also a Natura 2000 site, down to the 200 metre isobath.

Norway: Six sites were reported in December 2005. Norway completed all the reporting requirements, including the electronic nomination database, on time. The six sites are: Selligrunnen (nature reserve), Røstrevet, Sularevet, Iverryggen, Tisler, and Fjellknausene, the latter five of which have fisheries closures to bottom-tending gear. The six in total are 190 539 hectares.

Germany: Two very large sites were reported in January 2006, and two more in April 2006. The sites are: Helgoland Seabird Protected Area (a Natura 2000 SPA), Schleswig-Holstein Wadden Sea (national park and Natura 2000 SCI), SPA-Eastern German Bight (Natura 2000 SPA), and

¹ This 2006 total also corrects mistakes that occurred in last year's reporting. The total in last year's report which read as "25 093 km²" should have correctly been 25 426 km².

Lower Saxony Wadden Sea National Park (Natura 2000 SPA and SAC). The sites comprise a total of 1 192 278 hectares. In all, more than 90% of German coastal waters are also OSPAR MPAs, with large sections of the EEZ waters included as well.

Sweden: Six sites were reported in January 06: Koster-Väderö archipelago (some enhanced protections including fisheries restrictions), Gullmarsn fjord (also with enhanced protections), Nordre älv estuary (fisheries closures), Kungsbacka fjord (nature reserve), Fladen, and Lilla Middelgrund. The six sites overlap Natura 2000 sites, and are a total of 97 177 hectares. Fladen and Lilla Middelgrund both have portions extending into the EEZ (3762 ha and 15 921 ha, respectively).

UK: Fifty-six sites were reported as OPSAR MPAs in January 06. All sites are also Natura SACs. Information on the management of the sites and precise landward boundaries (and consequently accurate area data) for the sites are currently being finalised following the agreement of working understanding on landward limits of the OSPAR Maritime Area for the purposes of the MPA network. Total area of sites reported by the UK is estimated to exceed one million hectares.

France: Eight sites were reported in March 2006: Réserve Naturelle Nationale de la Baie de Somme, Réserve Naturelle de l'Estuaire de la Seine, Réserve Naturelle Nationale du Domaine de Beauguillot, Réserve Naturelle de la Baie de l'Aiguillon, Réserve Naturelle de la baie de Saint Brieuc, Archipel des Sept îles, Réserve Naturelle de Moëze-Oléron, Réserve Naturelle du Banc d'Arguin. They total 27 453 hectares, and are also Natura 2000 sites.

Future progress on identification and selection of MPAs

A number of Contracting Parties have reported that they are currently working on the selection of further MPAs for possible reporting during the course of 2007. Future possibilities are summarized below in alphabetical order.

Belgium: A Royal decree was issued on 14 October 2005 in which five areas (partially overlapping) were delineated. Two were proposed under the Habitats Directive (one has already been accepted by the European Commission), and three were indicated as SPAs under the Birds Directive. All five areas are within the Belgian territorial waters. The next step is a study to indicate whether it would be relevant if one or more of these sites could also qualify to be nominated as an OSPAR MPA, or whether other areas would qualify. Belgium prepared a national report on the best way to implement OSPAR Recommendation 2003/3 which was submitted to the Belgian government in early 2007. Decisions on the reporting of any sites to OSPAR will follow after the consideration of this report.

Denmark: Denmark has recently (March 2007) reported 18 MPAs including 7 within the Danish EEZ. These will be reported on in more detail in next year's MPA status report.

France: The French Parliament adopted in 2006 a law on national parks which would provide a legal basis for creation of marine natural parks in waters under its jurisdiction. The selection of French MPAs submitted as components of the OSPAR network of MPAs consists exclusively of MPAs that already have a management body and a management plan which has been approved or is in the process of being approved. France is currently working on the selection of other marine protected areas which could be added to the list as soon as they have a management body and management plan. No new sites are expected before 2008.

Iceland: Iceland is planning work during 2007 to report five areas with cold-water coral reefs, which have been closed to fishing since 2005 covering 80 km² in total, as OSPAR MPAs. One hydrothermal vent field and the marine area around the volcanic island Surtsey has also been protected and work is underway to report these sites to OSPAR. Area closure has been an integrated part of fisheries management in Iceland for decades. For example, a total ban for bottom trawling applied to approximately 16 000 km² of the EEZ of Iceland. In addition there are extensive areas closed seasonally or with certain gear restrictions.

Ireland: Ireland hopes to be in a position to submit a first report on selected MPAs by the meeting of the working group on marine protected areas, species and habitats (MASH) 2007.

Germany: Germany is hopeful that a further site selected by the Federal state of Bremen (estuary of the river Weser) will be reported in 2007. Further sites will not be reported until Germany's proposed marine special areas of conservation (pSACs) are accepted by the European Commission – probably not before 2008. Identification and selection of sites in the coastal waters (Territorial and Inner Waters) fall under the responsibility of the German States (Länder), whereas sites within the EEZ are under the responsibility of the Federal Government. However, it is pointed out that Germany has already put forward a substantial portion of its sea areas as OSPAR MPAs.

Netherlands: The National Spatial Strategy calls for a further delineation of boundaries of areas with special ecological values to take place in the *Integral Management Plan North Sea 2015*. In this national Management Plan (July 2005) four areas have received protection. Based upon the scientific report, *Areas with special ecological values on the Dutch Continental Shelf*, the boundaries of these four sites have also been delineated. These areas are: the Doggerbank, the Cleaverbank, the Frisian Front and the Coastal Sea, for which ministerial approval for nomination as proposed Natura 2000 sites as well as for reporting as an OSPAR MPAs is expected to be received. The sites are expected to be reported as OSPAR MPA by mid-2008. This is the first step as part of the official procedure to designate these areas by 2009.

Norway: In general, Norway will select further sites when the first phase of Norway's national plan for MPAs has been fulfilled, probably not before 2009, with 34 sites under consideration. In the meantime, cold water coral surveys are continuing and these may lead to the selection of further areas as OSPAR MPAs. Although Norway has not previously considered seabird areas as potential OSPAR MPAs, in light of the selection of such areas by other Contracting Parties, Norway is examining 36 such sites.

Portugal: In addition to the new sites reported to MASH 2006 as having been selected as components of the OSPAR network (see *Reporting of new MPAs*, above), Portugal is working on a proposal for an MPA for the Sedlo seamount in the EEZ around the Azores, which has been the subject of two stakeholder workshops. Portugal hopes to submit a report on the selection of this in 2007.

Spain: Spain highlighted that having both a large and diverse maritime area and a complex governmental system posed particular challenges to identification and selection and reporting of MPAs. Spain is working through contact with relevant Spanish Institutional Agencies and public administrations to collect the scientific data for the identification of the National Marine Special Areas and to analyse the existing conservation measures within the Spanish OSPAR Area in order to identify those areas which met the OSPAR criteria. Two areas are currently under consideration, and it is expected that these will be reported in 2007. It had been hoped that one would be reported before the end of 2006; however, progress was delayed because of the complex mix of technical, legal and administrative issues that needed to be addressed.

Sweden: Sweden indicated that three new areas have been proposed to the government as Habitats Directive sites. A decision is expected in 2008. Once a decision has been made, they could be put forward as OSPAR MPAs. The sites under consideration are: Persgrunden; Morups / Röde Bank; and Stora Middelgrund.

UK: The UK is in the process of finalising the exact landward boundaries of the 56 sites reported in January 2006 following resolution of uncertainties over how best to delineate the landward extent of the OSPAR Maritime Area, and consequently the relevant parts of SACs contributed as OSPAR MPAs. As previously reported, the UK does not anticipate making further contributions to the network until 2008, but may have individual sites to report before then. Consideration is being given to creating legal powers to designate new types of MPAs.

OSPAR-wide overview of current MPA network

Following the second year of reporting, it is still not expected that the MPAs reported so far constitute an ecologically coherent or well managed network of MPAs. However, as the 2010 deadline approaches, this section presents a preliminary look at distribution of the MPAs reported so far, their features, and management.

Jurisdictions: The vast majority of sites reported to date fall within territorial waters. Only eight sites of the 87 reported sites fall within an EEZ (3 Norway, 3 Portugal, 2 Sweden, 1 Germany). One site (Portugal) is on an extended continental shelf. No sites are in areas beyond national jurisdiction.

Contracting Parties: Six of the twelve coastal Contracting Parties have so far reported sites. Table 1, below, indicates the numbers of sites per Contracting Party and associated area. Germany has reported the largest total area, approximately 12 000 km². The UK has reported the most sites, which range in size. Although the total area of the UK sites has not yet been accurately determined, it is expected to exceed 10 000 km², making it the second largest contribution. Norway has reported MPAs covering about 2000 km², Portugal about 1700 km², Sweden about 1000 km², and France approximately 300 km².

<i>Table 1: Contracting Parties</i>		
	MPAs	Sq. Km.
Belgium	0	0
Denmark	0	0
France	8	275
Iceland	0	0
Ireland	0	0
Germany	4	11 923
Netherlands	0	0
Norway	6	1 905
Portugal	7	1 686
Spain	0	0
Sweden	6	972
UK*	56	9 858
TOTAL*	87	26 619
OSPAR area**		13 618 510

*Areas for the UK sites are estimates based on Natura 2000 marine area, which does not include the intertidal zone Actual UK OSPAR numbers are expected to be somewhat higher, thereby also raising the overall total.

**Not all of the OSPAR Maritime Area is navigable waters, with significant ice cover in the Arctic region.

OSPAR Regions: Table 2, below, summarizes the distribution of reported MPAs by OSPAR marine region. The best represented regions, II & III, are a reflection of the sites selected by German and UK, as well as those from Sweden, and two from Norway. Norway's other four reported MPAs are in the Arctic Region I. The seven MPAs reported in Atlantic Region V are all from Portugal. Three sites have been reported as MPAs by France in Region IV, the Bay of Biscay and Iberian Coast, and there have been no MPAs reported so far by Spain and mainland Portugal. Regions I and V are by far the largest regions, including also areas beyond national jurisdiction. However, to date, there have been no proposals for MPAs in areas beyond national jurisdiction.

NEAFC fishery closures: Also noted in Table 2, below, are nine fisheries closures recommended by the North-east Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC). *These are not OSPAR MPAs.* However, the areas are closed to bottom fishing, five of them from 2005 to 2007 (Hecate, Altair, Antialtair and Faraday seamounts, and a large section of the Reykjanes Ridge), and four of them from 2007 to 2009 (Hatton Bank and three areas on Rockall Bank). All the NEAFC closures fall within the high seas, and within OSPAR Region I. If these nine closures are accounted for, they significantly increase the amount of protection in the North-East Atlantic Region, from 1686 km² to 44 428 km² Likewise, the overall spatial protection within the OSPAR Maritime Area increases from 26 587 km² to 69 329 km². These NEAFC closures are shown in the map in Figure 2 of Annex 1.

Table 2: OSPAR Regions

	I: Arctic*	II: N. Sea	III: Celtic	IV: Biscay	V: Atlantic	Total
OSPAR Sites	4	38	35	3	7	87
Area (sq. km.)	1902	16279	6614	138	1686	26 619
Percentage	0.03%	2.11%	1.80%	0.03%	0.03%	0.20%
NEAFC closures**					9	9
Area (sq. km.)					42 742	42 742
OSPAR + NEAFC					0.70%	0.51%

Areas for the UK sites are estimates based on Natura 2000 marine area. Actual UK OSPAR numbers have not yet been received, but are expected to be somewhat higher, thereby also raising the overall total.

*Not all of the OSPAR Maritime Area is navigable waters, with significant ice cover in the Arctic region.

**The NEAFC fisheries closures are not OSPAR MPAS -see text above.

OSPAR biogeographic regions: The Dinter biomes have been accepted by the OSPAR working group on Marine Protected Areas, Species and Habitats (MASH) as one indication of broad-scale representativity for the purpose of establishing the OSPAR network. Dinter (2001) delineated the OSPAR maritime area into three large *biomes*. The first Biome considered the pelagic waters less than 1000m in depth, of which there were three *provinces*. The second biome considered the seafloor up to 1000m depth, of which there were 17 provinces and sub-provinces. Finally, waters and the seafloor deeper than 1000m were treated together with two broad provinces. Thus altogether, there are 22 biogeographic zones. Using biogeographic zones as a surrogate for describing different ecosystems is generally accepted in the absence of detailed biological information. If an MPA network contains representative portions of each bioregion, it can be considered more likely to meet broad-scale ecological objectives, than a network that does not. As can be seen in the table below, representativity of the current network ranges up to 6.1% (due to the selection of MPAs in the Azores in 2006) of the biogeographic zones. However, thirteen of the twenty-two biogeographic zones continue to have no representation.

Table 3: Biogeographic Representation

Biome	Region / Sub-Region	Province	MPAs	Sq Km	Bioregional Area
Pelagic	Arctic	na	0	0.0	0.00%
	E. Atlantic Temperate	Cool-temperate	75	24780.5	0.37%
	E. Atlantic Temperate	Warm-temperate	12	1838.1	0.05%
Shelf & Slope	Arctic	Barents Sea	0	0.0	0.00%
	Arctic	Barents Sea: White Sea	0	0.0	0.00%
	Arctic	High Arctic Maritime	0	0.0	0.00%
	Arctic	NE Greenland Shelf	0	0.0	0.00%
	Arctic	NE Water Polynya	0	0.0	0.00%
	Arctic	SE Greenland, N Iceland	0	0.0	0.00%
	E. Atlantic Temperate	Boreal	43	19530.4	2.72%
	E. Atlantic Temperate	Boreal-Lusitanian	24	2805.0	0.62%
	E. Atlantic Temperate	Lusitanian-Boreal	4	130.4	0.09%
	E. Atlantic Temperate	Lusitanian Cool	0	0.0	0.00%
	E. Atlantic Temperate	Lusitanian Warm N	1	22.0	0.05%

	E. Atlantic Temperate	Lusitanian Warm S	0	0.0	0.00%
	E. Atlantic Temperate	Macaronesian: Azores	4	1376.4	6.10%
	E. Atlantic Temperate	Norway: Finnmark	0	0.0	0.00%
	E. Atlantic Temperate	Norway: Skagerrak	4	543.4	2.23%
	E. Atlantic Temperate	Norway: W. Norwegian	4	1901.7	0.55%
	E. Atlantic Temperate	S Iceland-Faero Shelf	0	0.0	0.00%
Deep Sea	Arctic*	na	0	0.0	0.00%
	Atlantic	na	3	309.3	0.00%

Areas for the UK sites are estimates based on Natura 2000 marine area. Actual UK OSPAR numbers have not yet been received, but are expected to be somewhat higher, thereby also raising the bioregional totals.

*Not all of the OSPAR Maritime Area is navigable waters, with significant ice cover in the arctic.

EUNIS: MASH have discussed if OSPAR sites could be evaluated according to the European Nature Information System (MASH 2005 summary record, annex 7). However, the system is currently not spatially comprehensive throughout the OSPAR maritime area, full data have not yet been provided to OSPAR, and thus an evaluation is not possible at this time.

ICES Eco-Regions: Within the framework of the Memorandum of Understanding between the European Commission and ICES, ICES was asked to provide information and advice about appropriate eco-regions for the implementation of an ecosystem approach in European waters. ICES convened a meeting of experts to provide a response to this request at ICES HQ Copenhagen 19-21 October 2004. In the subsequent report, ICES notes:

In general, eco-region boundaries were set to follow the boundaries of the ICES areas, unless there were strong reasons for making a division within a given ICES area. This is because fisheries management will be a very important component of the European Marine Strategy and will have a significant effect on the ecological and operational objectives that are set for individual eco-regions. Since fisheries are largely managed on the basis of data collected by ICES areas, and since it is important to use historic data collected for ICES areas to support fisheries and environmental management, objective setting and management will be more effective if the eco-regions are aligned with ICES areas. (p13)

Thus, these ICES eco-regions are somewhat different from either the OSPAR Regions or the Dinter biogeographic areas, though both were taken into consideration. Because different classification systems will emphasize different aspects of the marine ecosystems, one system may therefore be valuable in highlighting possible gaps in the MPA network that another system might have overlooked. Thus, there is no need to restrict any assessment of representativity to just one biogeographic classification system, and representativity within the ICES eco-regions is presented below in [Table 4](#).

Table 4: ICES Eco-Regions

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	K	
	Greenland & Iceland*	Barents Sea*	Faroes	Norwegian Sea	Celtic Sea	North Sea	S Euro. Shelf	Oceanic NE Atlantic	Total
OSPAR Sites	0	0	0	4	39	34	3	7	87
Area (sq. km.)	0	0	0	1902	6666	16227	138	1686	26619
Percentage	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.15%	0.66%	2.32%	0.03%	0.03%	0.20%

Areas for the UK sites are estimates based on Natura 2000 marine area. Actual UK OSPAR numbers are expected to be somewhat higher, thereby also raising the bioregional totals.

*Not all of the OSPAR Maritime Area is navigable waters, with significant ice cover in the arctic.

Natura 2000: Of the 81 sites submitted by EU Member States, 78 of them are also Natura 2000 sites. Generally, the boundaries are the same as for the OSPAR sites; however, for the four relevant Portuguese sites, smaller Natura sites are contained within much larger OSPAR designations; conversely, for the Swedish sites, the OSPAR sites were sometimes smaller. Of the EU Member States, only Portugal has submitted sites that are not also Natura 2000: Lucky Strike hydrothermal vent field, Menez Gwen hydrothermal vent field, and Rainbow hydrothermal vent field.

Management plans: Of those Contracting Parties that have formally submitted implementation reports, it was indicated that 13 of the 26 sites covered have management plans in place. In general, it was stated that plans were being developed for those that did not yet have one. (In addition, the UK has reported orally that all SACs reported as OSPAR MPAs either have management arrangements for Natura features in place or in preparation).

Conclusions

Rate of reporting of MPAs: Over the period covered by this report development of the network was limited, with just Portugal reporting sites, although it should be noted that due to the extension of last year's reporting deadline, most of the MPAs in last year's report were actually put forward in the period between January and April 2006. This has meant that the period covered by this report was rather less than a calendar year. By the 31 December 2006 deadline for this report half of the Contracting Parties had not reported on the selection of sites. The submissions have generally been fewer and slower than previously, and not all sites that Contracting Parties have indicated they will report have been received.

Overall area: The MPAs reported so far cover about 26 000 km². In relation to the overall OSPAR maritime area, this is still very small, even after icebound areas are removed². However, as noted above, some biogeographic areas have better protection than others, and this year's new MPAs reported by Portugal have meant that protection of the biome surrounding the Azores has increased from 2.3% to 6.1%. Nonetheless, 13 of the 22 Dinter biomes still have effectively no protection (<0.00%).

Distribution: Currently, the reported sites are not evenly distributed across the OSPAR maritime area. While even spatial distribution does not necessarily ensure ecological coherence, large spatial gaps can indicate ecological coherence is not being achieved. This currently uneven distribution is in part because half of the Contracting Parties have not yet reported sites. However, there is also a general tendency to nominate nearshore sites first, thus leaving the further offshore waters vacant for the time being.

Areas beyond national jurisdiction (ABNJ): To date, no MPAs have been proposed in areas beyond national jurisdiction, though one reported MPA (Rainbow Hydrothermal Vent) is on the extended continental shelf of Portugal, and as such, the waters above it are considered high seas.³ The need to identify areas beyond national jurisdiction that fulfil the selection criteria for MPAs has been recognised, and OSPAR 2006 endorsed the recommendation that efforts in this direction should be intensified. Accordingly, this was the subject of a special one-day expert's workshop held by the Intersessional Correspondence Group on MPAs.

Coordination with HELCOM: OSPAR and HELCOM have been working together on the establishment of a joint-MPA network.

- a. **Databases:** Currently each body uses a different MPA nomination database, reflecting the different criteria used in MPA selection for each Convention. As the final technical

² It can be assumed that no more than 20% of the OSPAR Maritime Area is icebound.

³ In cases where the continental shelf extends beyond 200 nautical miles, the seafloor may be considered under the jurisdiction of the concerned party (generally up to 350 nm extension of the continental shelf, as provided by UNCLOS), but the water column above it will already be an ABNJ. In such cases, coordination and cooperation between OSPAR and the relevant Contracting Party(ies), as well as the relevant organisations with management authority over ABNJ in the OSPAR maritime area, will be required.

problems have now been addressed for each respective database, the next step, it was agreed, would be to create a unified database. After examining the options, Germany (lead country for the OSPAR MPA database) and the HELCOM Secretariat have suggested that the most cost-effective approach will be to merge the two different databases together with each retaining its own tables and fields. This merged database would then be updated on a bi-annual basis.

- b. **Evaluation of ecological coherence:** A draft OSPAR document on the assessment of ecological coherence was presented to the HELCOM-BALANCE workshop on ecological coherence, 25-27 October 2006, in Helsinki, Finland. The workshop came to the conclusion that the criteria that will be used in assessing ecological coherence are representativity, connectivity, replication and adequacy/viability. Thus, both HELCOM and OSPAR are using the same criteria, and will continue to coordinate with each other as specific approaches are discussed and developed.

Guidance on ecological coherence: No Contracting Parties have yet attempted an assessment of ecological coherence of their national network or the overall network of OSPAR MPAs. BDC 2006 adopted theoretical guidance on what might need to be considered in the development of an ecologically coherent network of OSPAR MPAs. It was agreed that further practical guidance on how to assess whether MPAs reported by Contracting Parties constitute an ecologically coherent network of OSPAR MPAs was required. OSPAR 2007 has agreed to publish a background document outlining criteria and guidelines for assessing whether the OSPAR network of MPAs is ecologically coherent, which provided scientific background to the question of ecological coherence (OSPAR publication 2007/320). BDC 2007 agreed to adopt a MPA Network Rapid Self Assessment Checklist as a tool to assist Contracting Parties with network design and urged Contracting Parties to make use of the self-assessment checklist in future assessments of ecological coherence and other factors influencing the effectiveness of the MPA network (reference number 2007-6). Work is now underway to develop a practical assessment procedure. Three different approaches have been discussed as possible tools in an assessment toolbox: 1) a self-assessment checklist based on expert knowledge; 2) a species-habitat matrix based on reporting into the MPA database; and 3) spatial assessments based on GIS data. These will be considered again in the 2007/2008 cycle of meetings.

Current Status of Ecological coherence: Given that the identification and selection of sites as MPAs has not been complete in 2005 and 2006, it is self-evident to note that these do not yet represent an ecologically coherent network. While this is not unexpected at the beginning of the process, in order to achieve this goal by 2010, considerable effort is still required. The guidance discussed in the previous paragraph, if acted upon, would lend support to Contracting Parties in achieving this goal. Given the ongoing evolution of the OSPAR network, it is expected that its ecological coherence will be evaluated annually in the lead up to 2010, and this should become more sophisticated over time, as better data and agreed-upon techniques become available.

Data to determine ecological coherence: As the number of OSPAR reported MPAs increases, it will become more possible to evaluate the ecological coherence of the network. The methods for such an evaluation will be developed in the guidance referred to in the previous paragraphs, but will require ecological data. Currently, very few data have been collected by OSPAR for the OSPAR maritime area. Therefore Contracting Parties are urged to begin to consider what data would be available for such analyses. Contracting Parties are encouraged to make data or publications relevant to ecological coherence analyses available to OSPAR, or to indicate where such data can be found.

Natura 2000 overlap: The initial OSPAR MPAs reported from EU countries largely overlap existing Natura 2000 sites. However, given that the geographical scope of the OSPAR network is larger (including ABNJ), that the ecological criteria for MPA selection within OSPAR are broader (including a different list of threatened and endangered species and habitats), it is expected that if the sites selected for the OSPAR network are limited to existing Natura 2000 sites exclusively, then it is unlikely that the OSPAR network's ecological goals will be met. The sites selected by Portugal / The Azores, however, are an important development, as three sites are not Natura 2000

at all, and for the others, a smaller Natura 2000 site(s) is nested within a larger OSPAR MPA. This approach could be considered by the other Contracting Parties that are EU Member States, all of which have to date put forward only Natura 2000 sites.

Reporting accuracy: In generating last year's statistics, the MPA status report largely relied on the reporting from Contracting Parties. This year, the GIS data have been more actively employed. In doing so, several inconsistencies have arisen between what was reported and what the GIS data indicate (re size of sites and biogeographic zones). Contracting Parties are therefore encouraged to crosscheck their MPA database information with their GIS data before submitting these to OSPAR to ensure better quality control and accuracy.

Management: As sites are reported, attention needs to turn to ensuring that sites are well managed through creating management plans or equivalent mechanisms, and secondly to evaluating management effectiveness. BDC 2007 adopted a score card on the management effectiveness of Marine Protected Areas as a tool for use by Contracting Parties in the self-assessment of management effectiveness of OSPAR Marine Protected Areas and urged Contracting Parties to apply it in their management of MPAs (OSPAR agreement 2007-5). Where OSPAR MPAs are also Natura 2000 sites, there is no additional requirement for management of these sites, but any management should be reported to OSPAR. To date, no Contracting Party has submitted management plans or reported evaluations of management effectiveness. Therefore, Contracting Parties are encouraged to report on the progress made in the development of management plans (does not exist / under development / completed / implemented), and when they exist, to submit these management plans in accordance with the OSPAR management guidelines (OSPAR agreement 2003-18).

Annex 1:

Figure 1. Map of sites reported as components of the OSPAR Network of MPAs (as of 31 December 2006)

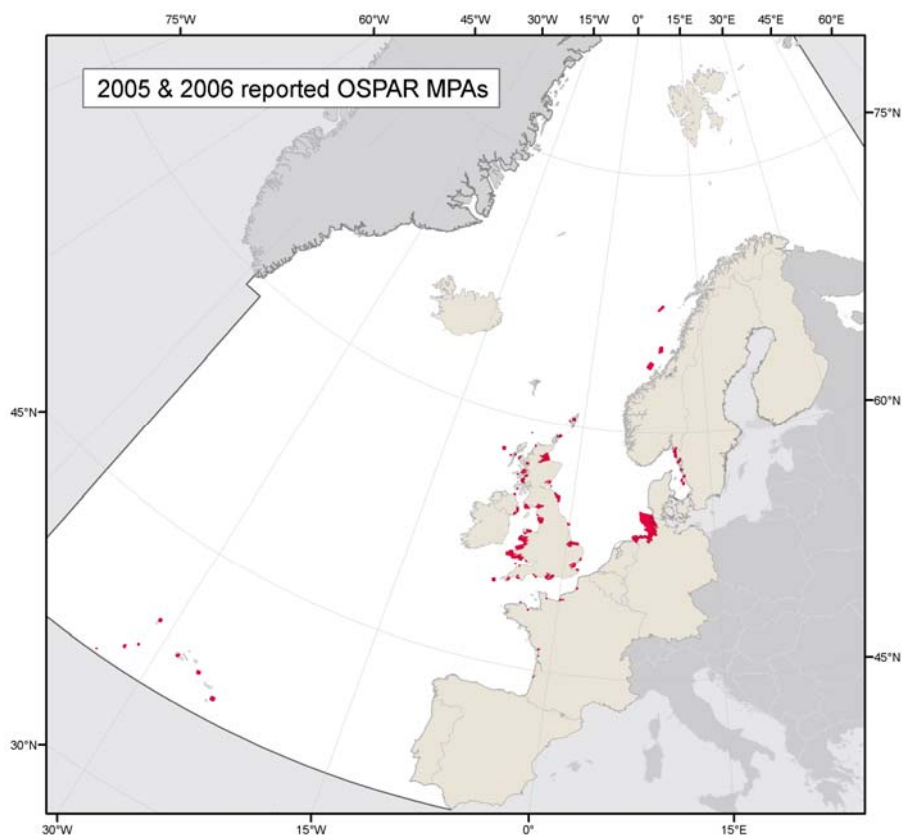
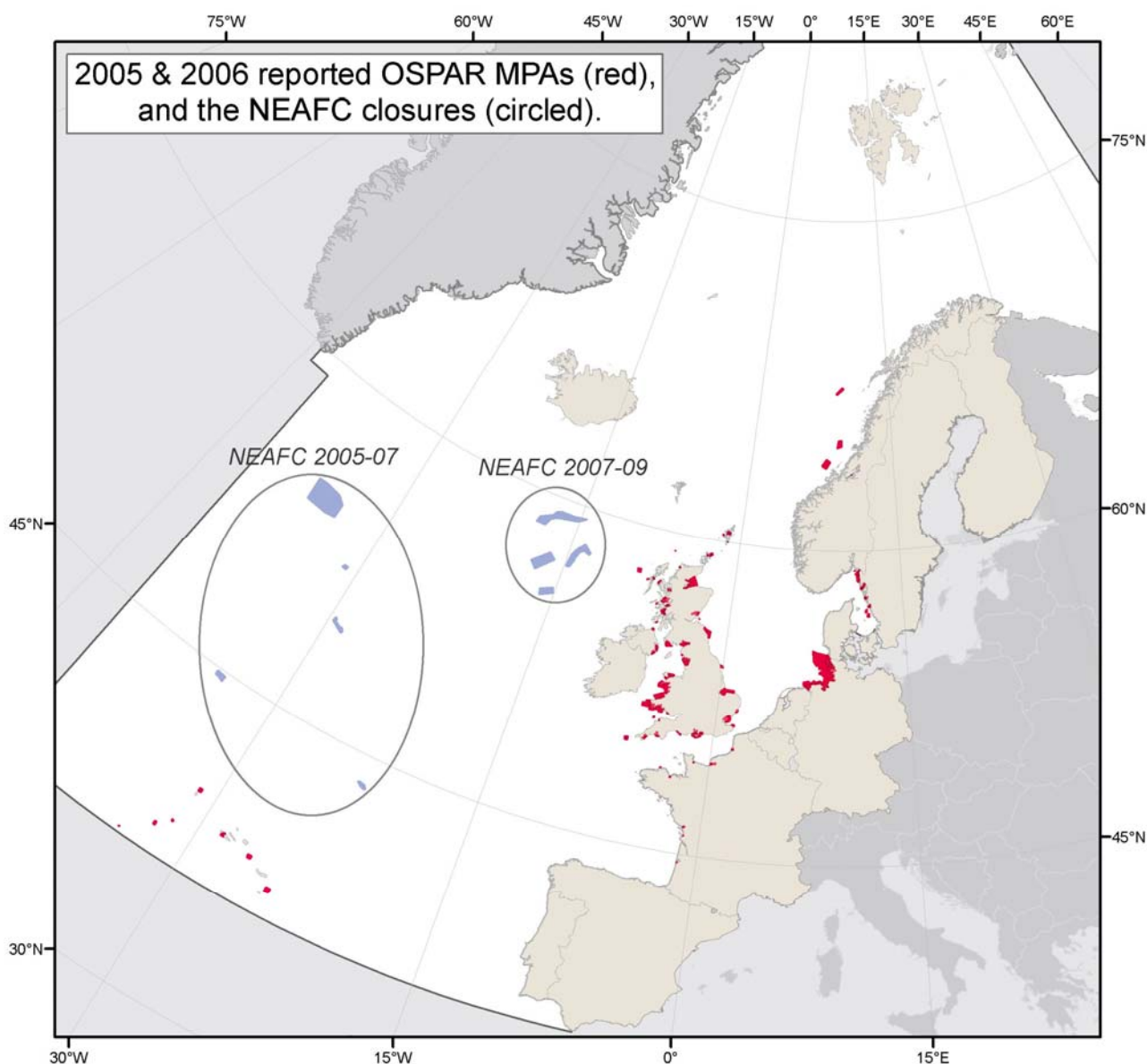


Figure 2. Map of sites reported as components of the OSPAR Network of MPAs (as of 31 December 2006) and temporary NEAFC fisheries closures. NB. NEAFC fisheries closures are not OSPAR MPAs and are included as an example of additional protection in the high seas of the North-East Atlantic



Notes

To increase visibility, the outlines of the reported OSPAR MPAs (in red) and NEAFC fisheries closures (blue) are outlined slightly larger than to scale.
French data are © MNHN.

Annex2: Summary of reported OSPAR MPAs (as of 31 Dec. 2006)

Contracting Party	Name	Size (Ha)
Belgium	none	0
Denmark	none	0
France[#]	Archipel des Sept îles	280
France[#]	Réserve Naturelle de l'Estuaire de la Seine	8 528
France[#]	Réserve Naturelle de la Baie de l'Aiguillon	4 900
France[#]	Réserve Naturelle de la baie de Saint Briec	1 140
France[#]	Réserve Naturelle de Moëze-Oléron	6 720
France	Réserve Naturelle du Banc d'Arguin	2 200
France	Réserve Naturelle Nationale de la Baie de Somme	3 000
France[#]	Réserve Naturelle Nationale du Domaine de Beauguillot	685
France	TOTAL	27 453
Iceland	none	0
Ireland	none	0
Germany	Helgoland seabird protection area	161 065
Germany	Lower Saxony Wadden Sea national park	276 700
Germany	S-H Wadden Sea national park	441 000
Germany	SPA-Eastern German Bight	313 513
Germany	TOTAL	1 192 278
Netherlands	none	0
Norway	Fjellknausen	190
Norway	Iverryggen	62 600
Norway	Røstrevet	30 500
Norway	Selligrunnen	69
Norway	Sularevet	97 000
Norway	Tisler	180
Norway	TOTAL	190 539
Portugal	Corvo Island	25 736
Portugal	D. João de Castro seamount	35 370
Portugal	Faial-Pico Channel	24 006
Portugal	Formigas Bank	52 527
Portugal	Lucky Strike hydrothermal vent field	19 218
Portugal	Menez Gwen hydrothermal vent field	9 500
Portugal	Rainbow hydrothermal vent field	2 215
Portugal	TOTAL	168 572
Spain	none	0
Sweden[#]	Fladen	10 395
Sweden[#]	Gullmarn fjord	11 368
Sweden	Koster-Väderö archipelago	42 600
Sweden[#]	Kungsbacka fjord	7 867
Sweden[#]	Lilla Middelgrund	17 864
Sweden[#]	Nordre älv estuary	7 082
Sweden[#]	TOTAL	97 177

United Kingdom*	Alde Ore and Butley Estuaries SAC	0
United Kingdom*	Ascrib, Isay and Dunvegan SAC	2 585
United Kingdom*	Berwickshire and North Northumberland Coast SAC	47 613
United Kingdom*	Braunton Burrows SAC	0
United Kingdom*	Cardigan Bay/Bae Ceredigion SAC	95 381
United Kingdom*	Carmarthen Bay and Estuaries/ Bae Caerfyrddin ac Aberoedd SAC	54 269
United Kingdom*	Chesil and the Fleet SAC	579
United Kingdom*	Dornoch Firth and Morrich More SAC	0
United Kingdom*	Drigg Coast SAC	0
United Kingdom*	Eileanan agus Sgeiran Lios mór SAC	969
United Kingdom*	Essex Estuaries SAC	13 842
United Kingdom*	Fal and Helford SAC	3 833
United Kingdom*	Faray and Holm of Faray SAC	629
United Kingdom*	Firth of Lorn	20 975
United Kingdom*	Firth of Tay & Eden Estuary SAC	8 492
United Kingdom*	Flamborough Head SAC	5 050
United Kingdom*	Glannau Môn: Cors heli / Anglesey Coast: Saltmarsh SAC	0
United Kingdom*	Isle of May SAC	310
United Kingdom*	Isles of Scilly Complex SAC	20 138
United Kingdom*	Kenfig/ Cynffig SAC	0
United Kingdom*	Limestone Coast of South West Wales/ Arfordir Calchfaen de Orllewin Cymru SAC	0
United Kingdom*	Loch Creran SAC	1 214
United Kingdom*	Loch Laxford SAC	1 221
United Kingdom*	Loch Moidart and Loch Shiel Woods SAC	0
United Kingdom*	Loch nam Madadh SAC	1 740
United Kingdom*	Lochs Duich, Long and Alsh Reefs SAC	2 262
United Kingdom*	Luce Bay and Sands SAC	47 106
United Kingdom*	Lundy SAC	2 911
United Kingdom*	Mòine Mhór SAC	0
United Kingdom*	Monach Islands SAC	3 052
United Kingdom*	Moray Firth SAC	151 342
United Kingdom*	Morecambe Bay SAC	60 953
United Kingdom*	Mousa SAC	531
United Kingdom*	Murlough SAC	10 474
United Kingdom*	North Rona SAC	503
United Kingdom*	Papa Stour SAC	2 056
United Kingdom*	Pembrokeshire Marine/ Sir Benfro Forol SAC	132 547
United Kingdom*	Pen Llyn a'r Sarnau/ Llyn Peninsula and the Sarnau SAC	135 218
United Kingdom*	Plymouth Sound and Estuaries SAC	3 201
United Kingdom*	Rathlin Island SAC	3 110
United Kingdom*	Sanday SAC	9 655
United Kingdom*	Solent Maritime SAC	1 586
United Kingdom*	Solway Firth SAC	0
United Kingdom*	Sound of Arisaig (Loch Ailort to Loch Ceann Traigh) SAC	4 557
United Kingdom*	South Wight Maritime SAC	19 068
United Kingdom*	South-East Islay Skerries SAC	1 199
United Kingdom*	St Kilda SAC	17 445
United Kingdom*	Strangford Lough SAC	10 009
United Kingdom*	Sullom Voe SAC	2 672

United Kingdom*	Sunart SAC	4 713
United Kingdom*	Thanet Coast SAC	2 439
United Kingdom*	The Wash and North Norfolk Coast SAC	54 958
United Kingdom*	Treshnish Isles	1 786
United Kingdom*	Tweed Estuary SAC	0
United Kingdom*	Y Fenai a Bae Conwy/ Menai Strait and Conwy Bay SAC	21 186
United Kingdom*	Yell Sound Coast SAC	462
United Kingdom*	TOTAL	985 841
OSPAR*	Grand Total	2 661 859

*Areas for the UK sites are estimates based on Natura 2000 marine area, which do not include the inter-tidal. Actual UK OSPAR numbers are expected to be somewhat higher.

#These numbers have been corrected since last year's reporting.