



## Setting sail for Pobie Bank Reef



This month saw the JNCC and Marine Scotland offshore survey team set sail aboard the MRV Scotia for Pobie Bank Reef Special Area of Conservation, a Marine Protected Area (MPA) off the east coast of Shetland.

Designated for bedrock and stony reef, Pobie Bank Reef MPA is approximately 70km long and 21km wide. As it lies across the 12 nautical mile territorial waters boundary, advice on this MPA is jointly delivered between JNCC and NatureScot.

With a large portion of the seabed successfully surveyed in 2013, the aim of this survey is to collect data to complete the map of reef habitat for the whole MPA using a combination of sonar methods and underwater camera transects. The photos and videos of the seabed collected will also be used to identify changes in the communities of animals living on the seabed over time.

The team have been blogging about their activities from the boat, catch-up on all the news via [our blog](#).

## Public consultation launched



A [12-week public consultation has been launched](#) seeking views on the marine monitoring programmes within the UK's Marine Strategy.

For the last decade, JNCC has played a key role in helping to implement the UK Marine Strategy which sets out a comprehensive framework for assessing, monitoring and taking action to achieve the UK's shared vision for clean, healthy, safe, productive and biologically diverse seas. The Strategy aims to achieve Good Environmental Status (GES) across biodiversity, productivity and human pressures in UK seas.

This consultation sets out proposals for updating Part Two of the UK Marine Strategy, first published in 2014 by Defra, the Northern Ireland Executive, the Scottish Government and the Welsh Government. Part Two highlights the monitoring programmes that the governments plan to implement in order to gather data to assess whether the indicators (laid out in the UK Marine Strategy Part One) show the UK's seas to be achieving or maintaining GES over the next 6 years.

For more than 25 years JNCC has provided robust evidence and trusted advice on nature conservation to enable UK governments to achieve their policy objectives. As a public body we also work in partnership with business and society. Our people are dedicated to providing high-quality evidence and advice on the natural environment for the benefit of current and future generations. Our vision is to be a world-leading provider of innovative solutions, placing nature at the heart of sustainable wealth and wellbeing.



## 'Climate-smart' decision-making



Last year, JNCC undertook a Defra-funded project to develop the evidence-base to support 'climate smart' decision-making in the marine environment, specifically in the context of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs). One of the case studies the project focused on was The Canyons MPA, which is designated for four deep-sea habitats. As part of this project, JNCC worked with the Marine Biological Association of the UK to develop benchmarks for climate change pressures and assess the potential sensitivities of The Canyons MPA features to ocean warming and ocean acidification.

This work was presented by JNCC's Ellen Last in a poster at the recent 1st virtual Deep-sea Biology Symposium #eDSBS2020 and is also available on [ResearchGate](#).

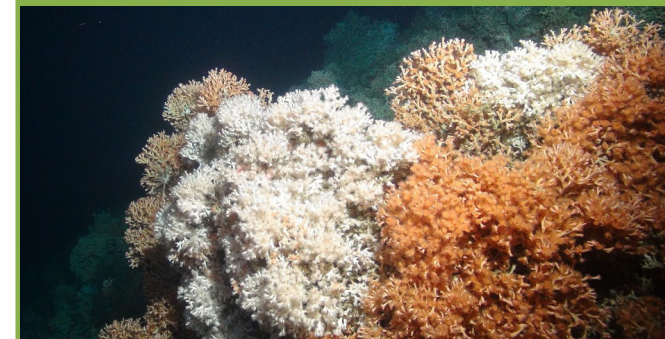
## Mitigating resource depletion impacts



The Agreement on the Conservation of Small Cetaceans of the Baltic, North East Atlantic, Irish and North Seas (ASCOBANS) focuses on an area that is host to a high diversity of small cetaceans such as bottlenose, striped and common dolphins, long-finned pilot whales and several beaked-whale species. JNCC's Nikki Taylor is representing JNCC on the recently convened [Resource Depletion Working Group](#) (RDWG) which was assembled following a request from the ASCOBANS Advisory Committee, given concerns over the potential influence of resource depletion, i.e. reduction/change in prey availability, on small cetaceans in the Agreement area.

The aim of the RDWG is to review the evidence and consider any actions that may be necessary to mitigate resource depletion impacts and make recommendations to the ASCOBANS Advisory Committee for further action.

## The Canyons MCZ updated advice



[Updated formal conservation advice for The Canyons Marine Conservation Zone \(MCZ\)](#) has been published. This advice supersedes previous conservation advice for this site and is available via the Conservation Advice section on the [Site Information Centre](#).

The updated advice comprises background information; Conservation Objectives for the site; JNCC's view of the site's condition; Supplementary Advice on the Conservation Objectives; and Advice on Operations, which sets out our advice on how human activities can affect site integrity and therefore achievement of the site's conservation objectives. These elements together form JNCC's conservation advice for this site and should be read in conjunction with each other.

## NPMS online training

With face-to-face training events planned for this season postponed, the National Plant Monitoring Scheme (NPMS) team have developed a programme of online training materials and virtual meetings to support volunteers to develop skills and keep connected digitally.

Numerous new resources, from NPMS methodology to habitat specific identification, have been created and delivered each week via [a dedicated webpage](#) on the NPMS website.



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