

## Environmental Audit Committee

Oral evidence: [Marine Protection Areas Revisited](#),  
HC 597

Tuesday 10 January 2017

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Members present: Mary Creagh (Chair); Peter Aldous; Caroline Ansell; Caroline Lucas; Scott Mann; Kerry McCarthy; John McNally; Dr Matthew Offord; Joan Ryan; Gavin Shuker

Questions 61 - 141

### Witnesses

I: Rodney Anderson, Advisor, North Sea Marine Cluster; Peter Barham, Chair, Seabed User & Development Group, Dale Rodmell, Assistant Chief Executive, National Federation of Fishermen's Organisations, and Emma Barton, Planning and Environmental Manager, the Royal Yachting Association.

II: Catherine Wensink, Forum Manager and Senior Conservation Officer, UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum, Charles Clover, Executive Director, Blue Marine Foundation and Thomas Hickey, Officer, Government Relations, Pew Charitable Trusts.

Written evidence from witnesses:

- [North Sea Marine Cluster](#)
- [National Federation of Fishermen's Organisations](#)
- [Royal Yachting Association](#)
- [UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum](#)
- [The Pew Trusts](#)

## Examination of Witnesses

Rodney Anderson, Peter Barham, Dale Rodmell and Emma Barton.

Q61 **Chair:** I welcome our four guests this morning. We have Rodney Anderson, who is an advisor to the North Sea Marine Cluster. Thank you very much for coming today; Peter Barham, who is the chair of the Seabed User & Development Group; Dale Rodmell, Assistant Chief Executive, the National Federation of Fishermen's Organisations; and Emma Barton, who is the Planning and Environmental Manager for the Royal Yachting Association. Thank you for joining us today.

We have heard in our previous inquiry that some of your organisations called for high levels of evidence to be used in the designation of further MCZs. Do you think more still needs to be done to improve the scientific evidence base of MCZs or do you think we should proceed on the basis of the best available information? Who would like to start? Emma.

**Emma Barton:** We have called to ensure there is sound, objective and robust evidence to base protection on and what we need fundamentally is that the species and habitats are within the sites that have been proposed to be protected and Government are committed also to take into account the economic and social evidence that is available for the sites. While we know that Government has invested a lot of money in the last few years in improving the biological evidence around these sites, what we are calling for is the improved evidence base around the social and economic impacts of designation in the sites as well.

Q62 **Chair:** What is your definition of "sound evidence"? When world-leading marine biologists come into this room and say, "We have one of the best marine evidence bases in the world" do you think that is not good enough?

**Emma Barton:** That is not what we are saying at all.

Q63 **Chair:** What is your definition of "sound"?

**Emma Barton:** I am saying a lot of these sites have improved in terms of the evidence that is there, particularly in the last few years. We need to ensure that that evidence is showing the species within those sites. The Marine Act requires that evidence of species found in those sites is available, along with their conservation and importance. That is fundamental.

But there has been a huge amount of evidence collected in the last few years in these sites but that has only been ecological evidence and what is poor at the moment is around the evidence of the potential impact on the activities that go on within the sites.

Q64 **Chair:** Do you not give that to Government as a matter of course?

**Emma Barton:** We do, yes.



Q65 **Chair:** So that evidence is given in by you, is it not?

**Emma Barton:** We give a reasonable amount of evidence to them and we are willing to work with them in order for them to improve that evidence base. However, we give that through our consultation responses. The best scenario would be if that evidence were used in order to develop those sites, where those boundaries should be developed and what potential management there should be within those sites so that when consultations come out later this year we have as much information as possible to enable us to understand what the impact of that designation might be. So our members need to know whether the clubs that were within those sites can continue their activities within them and what impact there might be on those activities. At the moment the information is poor in terms of even what management may or may not go ahead in those sites.

Q66 **Chair:** Anyone else wish to respond?

**Peter Barham:** The position is improving rapidly because certainly when the first tranche of MCZs was designated, the consultation that went out on those, was slim on evidence. We responded accordingly. It is fair to say that for tranche two and increasingly for tranche three, there is more evidence and therefore we are more comfortable.

In terms of what the impact might be, the real difference is that there is a concern that the degree of evidence required for designating a site is probably less rigorous than the degree of evidence that you might require to achieve a full environmental impact assessment, and therefore get a licence for developing a seabed.

You can argue that is entirely reasonable; the onus should be upon the developer to get a full understanding of the impact that his development is going to have. The difficulty arises if there is uncertainty about why the site was designated in the first place, so that the developer has to go back and fill that gap in evidence in order to carry out a full EIA.

But the situation is improving and it is probably worth adding the industry did, across the whole range of SUDG activities, provide quite a lot of the evidence to support the designation of MCZs in the first place. So, yes, it is improving.

Q67 **Chair:** The Aggregate Association has provided a lot of data, hasn't it?

**Peter Barham:** They have. A huge amount of data, regionally, locally, as have others in terms of work they have done elsewhere. But, yes, aggregates particularly are worth mentioning.

Q68 **Chair:** We heard evidence before Christmas about an area where—I think it was around the Port of Dover—the specific site there is a very clear-cut contrast between the people who wanted to get gravel out of the site, and the site to be protected was the gravel bank. Those conflicts are impossible to resolve, aren't they?



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**Peter Barham:** I don't think so. I don't know too much about the Dover Harbour Board and Goodwin Sands case. But what I do know is that in general the aggregates industry, through BMAPA—the British Marine Aggregate Producers Association—and the member companies, have done a huge amount of work to try to identify exactly what the impacts might be of any dredging and then to try to reduce those.

For example, one of the sites that was mentioned by Joan Edwards at your last hearing was Kingmere, which of course will now be an MCZ. A lot of the information for that came from the aggregates companies and it is worth mentioning, as an example, that what CEMEX and Hanson did was offer the mitigation whereby they would not dredge anywhere near sensitive black bream spawning grounds during the sensitive period of spawning itself.

There has been a lot of working together to try to come up with solutions. I was speaking to Joan yesterday and I said, "This might come up, are you comfortable with the Kingmere situation as it is?" and she said, "Yes, entirely". So the point I am trying to make is in many cases—and hopefully in all cases—there are win/win solutions to be had, but it does require lots of science, lots of evidence, lots of discussion and lots of agreement.

Q69 **Chair:** What about the fishing industry, because there is not a single site that has a no-take zone. So is that something that the fishing industry welcomes?

**Dale Rodmell:** If I may deal with the issue of evidence first, there is a question of not just the evidence itself, that is data on what is where and what activities occur, but also how that data is then used in terms of understanding what the risks are both to activities and the features themselves. My view is that a lot of this work could be brought forward to some extent at the designation stage to better inform what the likely management implications would be, rather than leave this to a post-designation piece of work.

There is a case of managing this in terms of risk, so for example if you have a site where there is not much going on in terms of human activities then the evidence levels are not necessarily so high in terms of addressing the question about management. Yet if there are lots of activities taking place and the potential for displacing that activity would generate significant socioeconomic impacts, or displacement in terms of impacts elsewhere, it is more important to raise the evidence standards for those sites, I believe.

Q70 **Chair:** Is that not just using the lack of an evidence base as an excuse continually to do nothing?

**Dale Rodmell:** No, not at all. This is about striking the right balance. It is about getting the right decisions in terms of designation and management to come through the system. That is not to say—if there is something very vulnerable that needs protecting then that is prioritised in



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terms of protection. I believe Defra has been doing that in terms of fisheries with its risk-based approach.

- Q71 **Chair:** I will come back to my original question, which is there is not a single reference zone that is a no-take zone in any of the designated areas at the moment. Is that something your organisation sees as a victory?

**Dale Rodmell:** The question there is—

**Chair:** It certainly sounds to me like the socioeconomic impact of not—you know, telling people that they can fish everywhere—in every marine protected zone that has been designated, there is fishing, isn't there?

**Dale Rodmell:** That is subject to whatever management measures come through the system. But the purpose of reference areas was to help underpin scientific research undertaken. My view there is we need a proper strategy for MPA science and where it fits into the wider marine scientific understanding. That should be the driver for determining the types of experiments, which may include areas where no activities take place, or it may be levels of activities where research is undertaken—so the full spectrum of scientific investigation that can take place applied.

The question there is that you do this working in collaboration with the stakeholders who are affected in the particular sites concerned. The problem previously was that these initial set of reference areas came through the four English regional projects very much at the end of the process.

- Q72 **Chair:** But the stakeholders were involved in the designations of those sites all the way through, weren't they?

**Dale Rodmell:** Yes, but the particular task of looking at reference areas is right towards the end of the process in the few weeks it was undertaken. I do not believe it necessarily involved the right stakeholders who applied to the sites concerned. It was very rushed and we had a very limited amount of information at that point. As Peter has highlighted, this evidence base builds over time. At that time it was very limited. A lot of the information we had on habitats was just model data. That situation is changing now.

- Q73 **Chair:** So you want more science but there are no reference zones in which the scientist can conduct the experiments. That seems to be what you are saying. Isn't that incorrectly contradictory?

**Dale Rodmell:** No, I am saying let's have a scientific process to understand human impacts in sites but it is about how to deliver that. My view is that that is probably best delivered as a post-designation process where the relevant stakeholders can be brought into that process and identify where you want to undertake different levels of experimentation—test scientific hypotheses at that point.

**Chair:** Thank you. Mr Anderson.



**Rodney Anderson:** Not as a reason for postponing or delaying the designation of MPAs, but when we look at the socioeconomic impacts of MPAs, there can be positives as well. So it is not just by looking at the cost of the impact in terms of cost to the industry or individuals. But there are often real benefits and potential economic and social benefit. That is a side as well that has not been adequately addressed yet. I think it is recognised by the Government that more work needs to be done there. But it would certainly improve the dialogue if there were a better understanding of the socioeconomic advantages of the current MPAs.

Another point. One of the problems with displacement is that we do not know what happens if something is displaced until there is another assessment. Because of lack of knowledge of the marine environment we could end up with a situation worse than the one we started with. Only about 30% of our seas have been mapped, in the modern sense, for hydrographic purposes, and considerably less has been mapped in terms of the habitats and the species. Even less is known about the water volume.

It is not a reason again for delay but it would seem sensible to begin a national process of seabed mapping, where you could make sensible choices and would know what was going on. There was a study carried out by the then BIS Department—it was sponsored I think also by Defra last year—which showed that the benefit cost of this would be seven to one.

Q74 **Chair:** Is your sector happy to pay for the costs of gathering more evidence because the taxpayers' spent £5 million on evidence gathering so far?

**Rodney Anderson:** I do not have a sector.

**Chair:** Your users group.

**Rodney Anderson:** I used to be in Government but we bridge public and private and third sector, so the question has to be asked of the industry. But I just make the observation that of the £120 million of marine science that is conducted every year about £100 million is from the private sector. So there is already a very substantial investment by the public sector. The real question then is: how do you get access to that information and share it, which I know the Committee has looked at before.

**Chair:** Thank you very much. Kerry.

Q75 **Kerry McCarthy:** Obviously we have the third tranche coming up and you presumably have all been involved in the JNCC discussions, consultations, and what that ought to look like. Are you happy with the sites that remain in consideration? Do you think we ought to be looking beyond those originally in the 126 that were first discussed? I do not know who wants to start on that.



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**Peter Barham:** I will start. Since day one we have talked about the ecologically coherent network. There has been a lot of discussion about this. In fairness, not only industry but others, including the wildlife bodies, have asked the same question: what does an ecologically coherent network look like? I do not think we have ever had a complete answer on that. The consequence is that one of the questions that begs itself for tranche three is: does that complete the ecologically coherent network?

The latest question mark on that is that next year OSPAR—the Oslo Paris Convention—will also do a review of the validity of the ecological coherence. So we have yet another stepping stone to go forward to before we can decide or the country can decide whether there is an ecologically coherent network. At the moment the answer is it is probably approaching it. I know that the JNCC workshop recently has come up with some more suggestions, which are now being looked at. The simple fact is that it does not matter how many there are from an industry perspective as long as—as I and others have said—they are managed properly, and we have some certainty about what we can or cannot do in them. I do not think the question has been answered and I suspect it will not be now until after 2017. Even then there will be periodic reviews after that.

Q76 **Kerry McCarthy:** Do you not think it is important, if the Government's objective is that the third tranche completes the network, that we do not wait until OSPAR passes judgment on it? We ought to have more clarity now on—

**Peter Barham:** It would be nice. If we know what an ecologically coherent network looks like then it would be nice to say that that is what we have.

Q77 **Kerry McCarthy:** But you are saying we do not.

**Peter Barham:** I am not sure that society thinks it does know what an ecologically coherent network looks like.

**Dale Rodmell:** I differ slightly. Peter has taken a rather general view of the network as a whole. What is important in terms of identifying any new sites to complete the network is the location of where these individual sites would be. In the original process, we had 60 months' worth of stakeholder engagement. So far in these potential additional sites we have had one workshop and that has only covered offshore waters. It did not go into inshore waters, although I understand Natural England has a process, principally working through IFCA, to consider those. But there is certainly nothing joined up in terms of dealing with national stakeholders at the moment. This is happening over a period of a few weeks. My understanding is that the nature conservation bodies will form their advice by the end of February in order for Defra to take that into account for public consultation for tranche three.





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We have had no engagement whatsoever apart from one site for highly mobile species, which was a process that was introduced in the summer of last year. I certainly think this part of it is being rushed and we are looking at essentially unintended consequences unless we get the right levels of engagement into the process.

**Q78 Kerry McCarthy:** We are obviously not coming completely new to discussing the third tranche, it has been part of the process right from the start, but you do not feel that we have done justice to it, we need to spend more time?

**Dale Rodmell:** I am making a distinction between sites that were selected by the English regional projects at the start of the process and new areas of search that have been undertaken presently. The areas of search include the Channel, for instance. They are searching for sand habitat in the Channel and that has come about in part because of surveys of tranche two. An existing recommended network has found that a lot of the habitat that was thought to be sand is not sand. So that has driven that. Some changes in the potential network of sites in the south-west mean that coarse sediment habitat have been looked at in those cases. The highly mobile species issue is something completely new that has come into the process since the summer.

**Q79 Kerry McCarthy:** What do you think should be done? You are clearly not satisfied with the process at the moment in terms of the consultation on the highly mobile species. Do you have a particular view as to how we go about dealing with that?

**Dale Rodmell:** Have a dialogue to start with. There has not been a substantive one. In particular, coming back to the previous responses, it is understanding from a socioeconomic point of view what the management implications are. We have no policy or evidence, a decision-making framework, to inform us as to what those management decisions could entail related to highly mobile species.

**Q80 Kerry McCarthy:** So it is difficult to give a view on it if you do not know quite what you are being asked.

**Dale Rodmell:** Exactly.

**Kerry McCarthy:** Did you want to come in?

**Rodney Anderson:** No, he has covered it.

**Emma Barton:** I certainly support a lot of what Dale said. For us it is also slightly more difficult in that we know that a lot of those 127 sites that are left over—so the 50-odd for tranche three—a lot of those were left to the tranche three because a lot more local work needed to be done. The plan for 2016 was to carry out local stakeholder engagement to inform what the boundaries might be or what potential management might be. That has not happened this year.





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We know that potentially there is going to be workshops in March with recreational stakeholders in some of the more contentious sites but, as Dale has just said, Natural England's advice is likely to be finalised in February. Having those workshops in March, I am not entirely sure what they might achieve in terms of where those final boundaries and sites and information for the stakeholder consultation will be fed in.

The JNCC workshop was primarily focused at offshore stakeholders. I think 30-odd people turned up out of an invitee list of 100 and obviously, from my point of view, offshore sites are probably less of an issue.

Up until this point there has been very minimal stakeholder engagement other than a few one-to-one meetings with Natural England and Defra. People on the ground are completely unaware, particularly of these new sites that have not been discussed at all up until this point, some of which are inshore. In terms of tranche three, again everything has been left very late in the process. We had quite a long period of time between tranche two designation and when they plan on consulting for tranche three, where very little has happened externally from Government.

**Q81 Kerry McCarthy:** I think the Chair has already touched on reference areas. In previous evidence sessions we have been told by witnesses how important it is to establish reference areas so that we basically know what the seas would look like if they were untouched and to give us something to measure progress against. What is your view, particularly on whether they should be perhaps in offshore areas that are less used, but to what extent should we be looking at considerations of the marine environment users, such as yourself, as opposed to just looking at it from a purely ecological point of view and where the most pristine or most diverse areas are?

**Peter Barham:** There are two key points with regard to reference areas. First—it is a point that does need making—if you undergo full environmental impact assessment of your proposed activity and it is not going to have an environmental impact, and that is agreed by all, then there is no reason why you should not continue it, even if it is a reference area. There is a logical follow-through there. Having said that, if it is decided that there should be these highly protected marine areas or reference areas then they do need selecting carefully. They need to be selected on the basis of good science so that if we are going to use them as reference areas they are available to be studied properly so we can see what happens in the seabed if you do nothing with it at all. That means there has to be committed funding for constant research and monitoring so that what comes out of that can be properly used, otherwise you end up with a paper park. Those two points are important.

There is only value in having a reference site if you have good science and continued science to go with it, which we can learn from and apply elsewhere.

**Q82 Kerry McCarthy:** Basically you have to do it properly.



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**Peter Barham:** It has to be done properly otherwise all you are doing is just isolating a piece of the sea to no benefit other than potentially what is at the bottom of it.

**Rodney Anderson:** It has to be effectively enforced.

**Peter Barham:** It has to be enforced, quite right.

Q83 **Caroline Lucas:** I wanted to touch on consultation and communication further. I know you have already touched on this yourselves but could you tell us anymore about how satisfied you were with the consultation for the second tranche of conservation zones? Do you feel that the interests of your members were properly reflected in the sites that were chosen? I know you have touched on this before but if there is anything more you would like to say on that, please do.

**Emma Barton:** A lot of those sites from our point of view were in some respects maybe the easier sites. Tranche one and tranche two have been the less controversial sites. Although we had some comments to make on them they were not necessarily any sites we had significant concerns over, so it is perhaps not the best test of consultation and engagement thus far.

Again, with the one or two sites that we did have questions over what activities could continue in them, the information in the consultation was quite poor in terms of assessing what the management might be and having practical management measures that could be suggested in the consultation.

We did quite a lot of work during the consultation period to do a lot of the work that perhaps should have been in the consultation. By funding a small amount of work ourselves that we could then speak to Defra about as part of our consultation response, we managed to demonstrate that a lot of the activity in one of those sites did not overlap with the habitat that was being designated. So we did that small amount of work. If that had been done before the consultation period, a lot of our members could have supported the site's designation. But because we did not know until we had done that work it was very difficult for members to understand what it might mean for them. That does apply for tranche three. If they know when the consultation comes out that clubs that were within these sites can continue to do some of their community-based sports activities then they can probably support the designation of those sites. But while it is a complete unknown it is very difficult to be able to say one way or another what the outcome should be.

**Peter Barham:** From our point of view, the degree of consultation was good. There was a lot of contact with industry, there was a lot of contact with trade and organisations with people that worked within the industries. In a sense, there is quite an enclosed community, if you think about industry. There are probably issues regarding wider stakeholders that I am not fit to comment on. Local yachtsmen, and so on, could probably be consulted.



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With regard to industry there was extensive consultation. If I had a comment it would be that the degree of information, particularly that came out with the consultation itself, was enormous. It did amount to thousands and thousands of pages because you had the consultation itself about each of the sites. You have the supporting information from Natural England. You have the socioeconomic impact assessment. There was quite simply a huge amount of information.

If I could just quickly add: some of the socioeconomic information was poor and grossly underestimated the potential impact to industry and, as Rodney said, did not take on board the potential benefits to society through natural capital, and so on. But overall, from an industry perspective, it was okay but it did require a lot of work.

**Dale Rodmell:** Emma, in particular, has reflected my views in the fishing industry. It does come back to the management, and I do believe it is possible to pass the process more than we are doing at the moment towards competence. Yes, tranche two was probably going to be less contentious than tranche three, certainly.

Q84 **Caroline Lucas:** So learning from that for the consultation on the third tranche, gleaned what you have said so far, would you basically be calling for better-quality information and maybe some judicious use of summaries and so forth? What else do you think the Government could be doing for that third tranche in terms of engagement and consultation?

**Peter Barham:** The raw information needs to be available, particularly if you have a specific site you might be interested in. It always has to be available and it has to be there to justify the designation process. The idea there could be summary information would be helpful.

Q85 **Caroline Lucas:** Mr Anderson, is there anything you would like to add?

**Rodney Anderson:** I will not echo what colleagues have said but can I make a more general comment about how this is communicated to the public at large?

**Caroline Lucas:** Yes, that was my next question, in fact.

**Rodney Anderson:** It is not, is the short answer to that. We are missing a trick. This is the biggest marine experiment we have ever conducted. It is huge and very exciting but it is not really being conveyed as such to the public at large. There is room for broader consultation and also broader engagement. I do not want to pre-empt your next question.

Q86 **Caroline Lucas:** No, do. It simply was about how to communicate with the broader public so go with it.

**Rodney Anderson:** Personally I would like to see a lot more done in this area. We did a study and asked organisations whose survival depended upon communication, retail outlets and the travel industry, what could be done better. Just to give you an example, there is a fabulous organisation called the Institute for Research in Schools. It is a small body but it



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facilitates and enables schools to give school students real research to do and to get directly engaged in important research. Imagine a situation where schools all over the country, not just coastal schools but also city schools, get their hands on this data, much of which is readily available, do some of the analysis and keep an eye on industry and the regulators to make sure they are kept up to the mark. You would then have very direct involvement. It would become something that would belong to everybody. Everybody is paying for this and it is supposed to be for the benefit of everybody so why don't we engage everybody?

**Q87 Caroline Lucas:** Previous witnesses have talked about maybe using mobile apps, using modern technology and being a bit more imaginative in terms of how we reach out, rather than just giving reams of documents you can go and look at if you are minded to do so.

**Rodney Anderson:** There is enormous scope. It is immensely difficult to find out very much at all about marine protected areas. You have to look on numerous sites. Even, for example, on the MMO site there are three or four different parts you have to navigate. There are two interactive maps that do not seem to speak to each other. There is information on one site about the spatial location of an MPA and on another site you find some information about what is being protected. Much of this is written as a thesis. It is really difficult stuff and appeals to a very, very narrow market.

**Q88 Caroline Lucas:** Was it your organisation that suggested a joint communications taskforce with marine NGOs, businesses and so forth? Is there a model of that anywhere that we could look at?

**Rodney Anderson:** I am not aware of one. It does seem a good idea.

**Q89 Caroline Lucas:** Any further comments on that from anyone?

**Emma Barton:** I certainly agree with Rodney. Often it feels like a closed shop until the point the consultation comes out and it is suddenly a surprise about what sites are being suggested and so on. If you look at, for example, the Northern Irish designation process, the first stage has just come to a completion. They were very open in the run up to that consultation about what sites they were going to consult on and what the possibilities were. They were going around various stakeholder groups. The Government officers were meeting with people. Everyone had seen a draft of the consultation and knew what was going to be in the consultation before it came out. We could develop that jointly. It feels very inward looking until the point where the consultation arrives and it is all a big surprise. I don't think that is really necessary, to be honest. It does not need to be top secret until the point that the consultation comes out. The general public would be on board much more easily if they knew what was going on around them up to that point. As it is, it is the NGOs and us that are getting that message out. Unless that JNCC workshop had happened we would not have known a number of these sites were on the table. It makes it very difficult.



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- Q90 **Peter Aldous:** I wanted to explore the management measures for MCZs, as to what they are and your views on them. This Committee's previous report, which I think came out in 2014, recommended that substantial draft management plans should be included as part of the consultation for the second tranche of MCZs. Were they?

**Rodney Anderson:** No.

- Q91 **Peter Aldous:** To what extent have you as stakeholders been provided with information for these plans and to what extent have you been involved in deciding on management measurements?

**Peter Barham:** This is a useful opportunity to reiterate some of what has been said already. The clearer the management measures are the better. The more they are evidentially based the better. For example, there is a tendency to assume that where "recover" has been put as a conservation objective, as a management measure, it is because it is for precautionary purposes and there may not be the information to support that. That takes us back full circle to where we were at the beginning regarding EIAs and so on.

Having said that, it is worth recording that, particularly for English MPAs, Natural England are on the brink of completing some extraordinarily useful work on conservation advice and measures. They have looked at all the possible impacts of activities. They have used the wealth of scientific literature to justify them. They are now putting that all together as an online tool to help developers work with Natural England.

- Q92 **Peter Aldous:** From what you are saying, it is not a question of the management measures not being evolved; it is a question of you, the stakeholders, not being involved in their evolution and preparation. Is that correct?

**Peter Barham:** The point I was leading up to was that Natural England are doing this extraordinarily helpful work very closely with industry colleagues. They have used their own access to literature but we had a number of workshops with Natural England, there has been a lot of discussion between Natural England and different sectors within the industry groups to say, "If we take this assumption about this particular activity, would you agree it is having an impact?" or whatever. There has been very close involvement with industry and it has been very productive. How that takes on management measures is obviously yet to be fully sorted out.

- Q93 **Peter Aldous:** I am wondering about the others, do you feel frustrated you have not been fully involved?

**Dale Rodmell:** I would not say that. In terms of fisheries management measures, yes, as I intimated earlier we have not maybe had sufficient upfront evidence in terms of understanding what the management measures would be at the designation stage. We could improve there. Over the process we have been improving the techniques that are used to understand fisheries-related risks to different marine habitats. It is a



novel area of science that has been evolving over the period of this process. It is getting better and better. Indeed, we have added to that process with our own research that we referred to in our written response.

From designation to management measures we are talking about a two-year period. Regulators, such as the MMO and IFCA, at the moment are still tending to go for a prohibition-style approach, to fisheries at least. If it is a vulnerable marine feature that is understandable. It is about clearing activity away from that area. If it is less vulnerable typically a zoned approach is beginning to emerge as the way through, where zones prohibit the activity. Alternatives would be for gear modification, for instance, effort management or something like that. We are not at the point of being able to implement those. That is because there is a pressure to implement management measures within this two-year timeframe. To do things like gear modification can take a bit of time and a bit of investment. To get the industry involved in coming up with such approaches is a longer-run thing. We are talking about up to five years to implement those kinds of measures. However, they are potentially more appropriate for less vulnerable habitats in some cases and it is enabling that to happen.

**Rodney Anderson:** There has been a systemic problem as far as management is concerned that it is almost circular. If you look at the impact assessment for the second tranche of marine conservation zones, it says that on fisheries everything has to be assessed individually, side-by-side and feature-by-feature. Therefore we do not know quite what the impacts are going to be.

If you look at it from the point of view of other industries, it all rests on the environmental impact assessment and the marine licensing process. Marine licensing is an entirely reactive process. It does not kick in until somebody wants to do something. In theory it is supposed to be plan led but there is no plan. You have a system that is seeking to design a management regime that rests on marine licensing. That in turn should be led by the plan but there is no plan.

The starting point for this is to have a plan. Once you have a plan the other bits and pieces fit into place.

Q94 **Peter Aldous:** Emma, I welcome your views. I am conscious you have looked at the situation in both Northern Ireland, as you have already mentioned, and Wales.

**Emma Barton:** We have looked at the whole of the UK. Differently to fisheries and licence activities, so far there have not been any firm management measures in terms of recreation in any of the sites so far. It is difficult to comment on how management is being implemented because it has not been yet. There are a lot of voluntary measures that are in place, particularly for European sites that are there at the moment. We know education works very well with recreational boaters in particular





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through the work we do. There is some activity going on there in terms of education on how people can act in these marine conservation zones.

We have been working with the MMO on how we could go about management in some of these areas. What we are lacking is a lot of evidence, both in terms of impact and solutions to those impacts. There have been a few small-scale projects in the last year or so looking at those issues. Each time the Government has invested maybe £10,000 on basically literature searches, but it is not moving the science on, it is looking at what science is there at the moment. If you compare that kind of investment to the kind of investment in ecological evidence, it is very small scale.

Q95 **Peter Aldous:** Are you saying the MMOs and IFCA's form of management is not properly resourced?

**Emma Barton:** We do not get involved with the IFCA so much but certainly with the MMO a lot of these management measures might cost an awful lot of money to implement, particularly if you are looking at legislative solutions rather than voluntary ones. They are going to cost money to implement and then definitely to enforce and monitor. They are not going to be effective if they are not properly resourced.

Q96 **Peter Aldous:** Might that also predicate against having unique management plans for individual MCZs?

**Emma Barton:** Certainly that is quite resource intensive. We are not just talking about MCZs here. There are a lot of European sites that have been designated for quite some time and still do not have management in place. There is obviously a resource issue there.

**Rodney Anderson:** I take a slightly different view. The sensible thing to have done would have been to develop management plans as the MPAs were being rolled out, long before the marine conservation zone process was started. This is not a rushed job. OSPAR were talking about this 20 years ago. It was 18 years ago that the UK agreed to set up a network. There was plenty of advice around that it is a good idea to have a management plan. The fact we do not have management plans in place in the case of many of these MPAs means we are catching up. Because it is difficult to catch up should not be a reason for not doing it. The need for individual management plans is a product of the way the Government has decided to introduce ring-protected areas of all kinds. If one looks at what we do and do not know, the way it works at the moment is in the case of most sites we know there is a feature there but we do not know whether it is improving or getting worse. We do not know at the time of designation what the impacts might be on that. We have been through all of that.

The answer in the impact assessment is that there will have to be individual measures for individual features and individual sites. If you are not managing that and do not have a management plan for that activity you will not know what you are doing. It does not have to be a large





document. It does not have to be a thesis. It could, in many cases, just be one sheet of paper. It will be a very clear communication about what you are trying to achieve as an objective, what are and are not acceptable activities, and, just as importantly for the managers, what resources you need to do this. It will be going on by implication without being codified at the moment. The need for this is not just from the point of view of industry, it is also from the point of view of those with concerns from an environmental perspective. How can anybody audit a process if there is no data? You build this up in tiers. Equally, how can the public take comfort that this enormous experiment is producing the desired results if the information is not there?

**Q97 John Mc Nally:** You spoke about Northern Ireland earlier. Are you aware the Scottish Government have Marine Scotland? It is the directorate that is concerned with integrated management of our seas. I wondered if you were aware it has statutory power to implement MPAs and co-ordinate the management. I wondered if you could comment on your impression of how well, or not well, they are doing?

**Dale Rodmell:** I do not have the knowledge to give you a solid answer there. My knowledge does extend to an understanding of how MPAs came about in Scotland and the slight differences to the English process and the criteria used but not exactly on how it fits together with the marine planning system.

**Emma Barton:** From our point of view, we have been heavily involved in Scotland in terms of the MPA designation process up there. As far as I am concerned we have had a very positive experience in Scotland and a lot of joint working with the Government up there looking at specific sites, where activity happens and where it doesn't and so on. I don't have any particular concerns at the moment in Scotland.

**Q98 Chair:** You talked about the need for a management plan, Mr Anderson. What about the MMO's use of voluntary measures, do you think that has worked? Can you give examples of where those voluntary measures have or have not happened?

**Rodney Anderson:** Can I answer the question slightly differently? There is room for both voluntary measures and statutory codification. In most cases you will need both. The starting point should be, as we have been saying earlier, dialogue with those people who are affected and seeking to demonstrate that there are benefits for them as well as possibly disadvantages. There will be winners and losers. You are not going to persuade everybody. There is always the risk of transgression. Voluntary measures might be helpful where you do not have the capacity to enforce by other means or monitor. It might be a substitute, in practice, for something.

It tends to work best with a discrete community. If you have a wide group of users, say a nomadic fleet, in my experience that could be difficult. You might agree something with the local fishermen but



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somebody may come down or up from elsewhere and what do you do in those circumstances?

I was directly involved with Lyme Bay at the time as I was in central Government. Although I have read much to the contrary, it was a measure of success for the voluntary arrangement. Local fishermen honoured the agreement. There was one breach in the two-year period but they sorted it out and it did not reoccur. It was an example of where Westminster decided appropriately to codify that in legislation because there were other risks. What we have seen since is that there have been bylaws and such like in place but there have been more breaches than when the voluntary arrangement was in place. Legislation and bylaws do not deliver compliance. They are an instrument. What delivers compliance is persuading the people you want to comply that it is a good idea to comply and, if necessary, having the surveillance and enforcement capacity to deal with that.

**Q99 Chair:** Do you think there is adequate surveillance capacity for enforcement?

**Rodney Anderson:** No, I do not actually. I cannot see how there can be. There are lots of bodies involved but if you just take the Marine Management Organisation, their surveillance budget has dropped from £10.1 million six years ago to £1.8 million now. Efficiencies are not going to deliver that. Adopting an intelligence risk-based approach is not going to deliver a result on that basis. Those are enormous cuts.

**Dale Rodmell:** If I may just follow on from Rodney to say where voluntary measures occur they are a success story because it is an expression that the people who are adopting those measures have bought in to the management process. Therefore you are likely to have better compliance, as Rodney has already alluded to, and a degree of self-policing taking place. It is still an evolving picture, of course, but regulators could do more to consider the voluntary approach fairly as part of their deliberations.

There is a wider point here about that deliberation, finding what the most appropriate management measures are for this particular site and area and whether there is time to do it. It can often require a bit more effort on the part of the regulator to come up with that but we could end up with better solutions at the end. To also follow on from Rodney, it may be a measure that comes up from the fishing industry or the local stakeholders in some way. It may end up having some back-up with a legal instrument. Indeed the people who come up with the measures themselves may want that because they want to protect their actions from others affecting them or they have been put at a disadvantage in some way. It is quite a complex picture in terms of looking at how to apply voluntary measures, but it is something that should be part of the process and every time it should be considered.

**Q100 Chair:** Would your members be happy—in the event there were reference areas, no-take zones—with satellite tracking data to show they were not



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fishing in those zones?

**Dale Rodmell:** In reality you are going to have multiple views. It depends on the particular circumstances where the management is being introduced. People understand the need for the right level of evidence to demonstrate that impact is not occurring.

Q101 **Chair:** What do you mean about the “right level of evidence”? We know if you do not fish you increase the biomass, the size of the animals and the condition of the seabed. We know that from marine protected zones across the world. Are you saying we need our own UK evidence to demonstrate that? We are back to this evidence business.

**Dale Rodmell:** Evidence in terms of demonstrating that the objectives of conservation are being achieved or the objectives of management are being achieved.

Q102 **Chair:** Your boats would have satellite GPS technology on them anyway, wouldn't they?

**Dale Rodmell:** Down to 12 metres at present, but not below.

**Chair:** Thank you, that is very helpful.

**Peter Barham:** To add a slightly different view on voluntary measures from the point of view of industry, as we have said before industry is highly regulated. All those industries that are members of SUDG are highly regulated. As we have emphasised, there is therefore the need to go through the full environmental impact assessment process. Consequently there is complete understanding of what potential impacts there are and, more importantly, whether those impacts can be mitigated, can be compensated and so on. Those are built in to the way a licence is granted and therefore are conditional to the licence. In a sense the industry view is there is greater certainty having gone through that process, having understood and managed the environmental impact. Seeing it regulated gives greater confidence to investors. They know their investment is going to be safe because it has been regulated and is clear cut and licensed, as opposed to the vagaries of changing views in terms of voluntary approaches and so on. Having said that, it is important also to say that industry does do an awful lot voluntarily in terms of providing data, good practice and so on. It is important to make that distinction between regulated and unregulated elements of business.

**Emma Barton:** It completely depends on what activity you are talking about. You will see a range of different views. In relation to recreation they are probably fairly similar to Dale's views. In terms of education and understanding of the environment it probably promotes better actions within MPAs than legislation would because our members are not out there to destroy the environment, they are out there to enjoy it. The majority of reactions you get to education are positive. You end up with the solution you are looking for by saying, “There is an important thing here. Could you avoid activity in that area or can you take this action when you are there?” You do not tend to get an adverse reaction to it. As



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I say, it depends on the situation, the activity and the industry you are talking about as to what the best solution is. We need to work together with the regulators to understand how best to approach that.

**Chair:** Thank you all very much indeed. That concludes our first panel.

### Examination of Witnesses

Catherine Wensink, Charles Clover and Thomas Hickey.

Q103 **Chair:** On our second panel, we have Catherine Wensink, Forum Manager and Senior Conservation Officer at the UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum, welcome; Charles Clover, Executive Director of the Blue Marine Foundation; and Thomas Hickey, Officer of Government Relations at the Pew Charitable Trusts.

In our previous evidence session just before Christmas, some of the scientists we spoke to felt that the Government had made more progress in the Overseas Territories than it had done at home. Do you think that is true?

**Charles Clover:** Yes.

Q104 **Chair:** Why do you think that is?

**Charles Clover:** Necessarily, the areas are larger. An area, for example, around Ascension of nearly the size of the UK trumps anything that has been done around the UK necessarily. This is a huge commitment. The blue belt commitment is a huge commitment that Britain needs to live up to, but if it lives up to it, it is an immense achievement, probably one of the greatest conservation achievements in the world. We are very supportive of it, as NGOs.

Q105 **Chair:** How far do you think we are towards the 100% achievement? Are we 50%, 70%, 30% there in the Overseas Territories?

**Charles Clover:** What, in terms of what we can do?

**Chair:** No, in terms of achieving that blue belt.

**Charles Clover:** You have to ask the question, what is a blue belt? In each territory it is a different thing, because there is a different population; there is different biodiversity; there are different politics and different things are achievable. In the uninhabited or less inhabited ones, more is achievable than in the highly populous ones. We have had very productive conversations with Bermuda, which is pretty highly populous. It is an area a sixth of the size of Isle of Arran, with a population of something like 60,000 people on it, and it likes thinking that it is in the lead in conservation in the world.

There are quite productive conversations to have with territories, but they are different conversations. I don't think it is possible to put a kind of percentage on it, but I think that we are doing pretty well. We are



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doing better than the Foreign Office thought we would do. Initially I think there was some poor feedback from the heads of OTs. We all registered that, but then there were much more diverse conversations, because I think they realised that they were not necessarily being told to do something, this was just an opportunity to do something that maybe some of their populations wanted to do anyway.

We have had some very productive conversations in the case of St Helena, in the case of Tristan and in the case of Ascension, where initially 50% was opposed. Now it looks as though the longline fleets do not want to fish in the other half because they might get regulated properly. They have not bought any licences this year. It begs the question, why don't we do the lot? We need to support the Ascension Island population in the income that they would otherwise be earning from rapacious fishing. We need to support them to do something else.

Q106 **Chair:** Are they rapacious fishers?

**Charles Clover:** The Taiwanese longline fleet is known as one of the shadowiest and most rapacious fishing fleets in the world. It has a long and bad record in shark-finning, etc.

**Catherine Wensink:** Could I add something about the Caribbean Overseas Territories, for example? In the manifesto it says, "We will now go further, creating a blue belt around the 14 Overseas Territories, subject to local support and environmental need". It is worth saying that some of the marine protected areas in the overseas territories date to before I was born. In fact, some of them are now coming around to extending and enhancing their marine protected areas in order to replenish no-take zones so they benefit from the overspill effect, but also as a reaction to changing conditions over time, some human-induced. Therefore, in many of the Caribbean territories "creating" is not really the right word and may be uncomfortable for some. In some cases they are already there and they are already being managed. In others they are already there, but not being effectively managed and support is needed, be that technical or financial resources.

Q107 **Chair:** Could you give us examples of where they are not being managed?

**Catherine Wensink:** Yes, I can give you a perfect example. There was an article in *The Telegraph* recently saying that Turks and Caicos was the fifth country in the world to have the most protected areas, but you have to remember that when talking about protected areas management, the resources there to have effective management of their marine protected areas is so low that even fuel for taking boats out just isn't there. We would like to see more empowerment of the NGOs there to be able to help effectively manage the marine protected areas, but there just isn't technical and financial resources for them to do so.

There are some excellent examples in the region. For example, in the Bahamas, the Bahamas National Trust was given sole responsibility by



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the Government for managing their first Marine Protected Area and that has led to a network of marine protected areas across the Bahamas. That would be a perfect example for somewhere like the Turks and Caicos, which regionally is next door.

Q108 **Chair:** Thank you. Mr Hickey, do you have anything to add?

**Thomas Hickey:** I would certainly echo Charles's point about the scale of ambition that has been shown by the Foreign Office. That is something to be applauded. There are commitments through this Parliament. Until designated, until realised, they are only commitments, but the blue belt has been described as the greatest conservation commitment by any Government ever and it has the opportunity to live up to that reputation.

On your original question, I think the difference between the domestic process and the UKOTs is really accounted for by political and legal context. The UK's domestic waters are some of the busiest in the world and a 50-kilometre box may be subject to a dozen different longstanding industrial interests and many facets of not only UK but EU law, whereas Pitcairn, for example, is 750,000 square kilometres, subject to the management of the Pitcairn Island Council. There is a simplicity there, which is an opportunity and has been recognised. But to echo Charles's point as well, that is not to homogenise the governance structures of the UKOTs, it is just a very different process.

Q109 **Chair:** The Pitcairn Island Council, do they have enough money to manage and enforce that or is it just—

**Thomas Hickey:** Yes. That is the project to which Pew can speak closely. We engaged with the Council from 2012. We have worked with them in terms of scientific expeditions and economic analyses. It should be stressed that the community themselves put the proposal to the Foreign Office unanimously to designate the reserve. It encompasses a 12-mile zone around each of the islands—and indeed, a small reef—where they can continue to fish. The Foreign Office is now providing monitoring and surveillance support for the reserve. It is the first designation under the auspices of the blue belt, which was followed by St Helena, but we hope that it is the start and by no means the end of the Government's ambition.

Q110 **Chair:** Anything to add, Mr Clover? You look like—

**Charles Clover:** I just wanted to finish off answering your question about the contrast between the UK itself and the overseas territories, simply because it is an interesting one. In the overseas territories, I think because there was not a thicket of agencies and bureaucracy, people were able to have a clearer idea about what the opportunity was, what the biodiversity gains might be and to go out and grasp those gains. It is an example that maybe we should be using in domestic waters, though they are more crowded and more difficult, but eventually we will have to bring this all back home.

Q111 **Chair:** Do you think the evidence was there around the overseas





territories?

**Charles Clover:** To an extent, when you have numerous endemic species, some of the largest fish in the world, for example, in Ascension and the Atlantic's largest population of green turtles, what more evidence do you want? But there was quite a lot of evidence compiled in several territories with Darwin funding and I think that has been extraordinarily useful, particularly around Ascension, which I can speak to most knowledgeably. Others may want to say whether there was as much evidence elsewhere, but these are very large areas with very self-evident biodiversity. Of course the overseas territories have something like just under 95% of the biodiversity that the UK is responsible for anyway. These are helping to fulfil CBD targets that we are signed up to.

Q112 **Chair:** Where does that 95% biodiversity figure come from?

**Charles Clover:** It comes from the Foreign Office White Paper on the overseas territories.

Q113 **Chair:** Where did they get it from?

**Charles Clover:** I have no idea.

**Catherine Wensink:** The FCO commissioned a report from the RSPB, which was a stocktake of biodiversity in the UK Overseas Territories. That is where that figure comes from. 94% I think is the—

**Charles Clover:** 93% or 94%, I can't remember.

Q114 **Dr Matthew Offord:** That kind of opened up some of our questions, I think, from what you have said so far. I am taking away from what you said that it has been very much a top-down exercise, that the Foreign Office have decided that we would have a blue belt and marine protected areas around certain countries. In my experience, that has certainly been what I have been told from places such as Anguilla, for example. What would you like to see the Foreign Office do more to encourage more support for the MPAs at the local level?

**Charles Clover:** There is a real point that the OTs are being asked to take on responsibilities without necessarily funding or possibly even a say in the matter. But I think the say in the matter has been addressed. There is a real sense that if there is a Government manifesto commitment, a UK Government manifesto commitment, then it is not something you are going to know about in advance or be consulted on, it is just going to appear in the manifesto and then there is going to be a general election. There is an extent to which you cannot know about it in advance, but they have been consulted and people have changed their minds about how things should be done because of how these rather less populous territories that I am talking about—not what Catherine is talking about—are concerned. But they have a real point and I think we should support them.



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Ascension, for example, is very anxious that the money may run out in 2020. They keep saying, "Can somebody reassure us after 2020?" and the Civil Service says, of course, "No Government ever gives an undertaking after the present parliamentary term". We are going to have roads; we are going to have hospitals; we are going to have airports. Why can't we say that we are going to have a long-term view? We have a long-term view about the airbridge to the Falklands, which lands on Ascension, so come on, you could be a little bit more positive for these people. Frankly, this is a population of half an English parish and they are being asked to manage either an area the size of the UK or potentially I would like them to be managing an area the size of Germany. You cannot tell me that 800 people can afford to do that on their tax base.

They need some reassurance and we need to start joining Government up to help them, because there are lots of things that we could be doing with a stroke of a pen that we are not doing, simple things like making their economies more able to absorb tourists, to bring in revenue. For example, the Americans do not allow a single commercial plane currently to land in Ascension. This is completely mad and we should be telling the Americans that if they want to have a base on our territory, they do it our way, not their way.

There is another thing. This Committee has been quite marvellous, in my view, in banging on at least twice about the application of Heritage Lottery funding to the overseas territories. I was recently in Ascension. I am going to St Helena, where the same problems apply, next month. There is a real need to do up these wonderful Napoleonic era buildings that are just simply falling down on Ascension. The principal building in Georgetown is empty; it is the Exiles Club. It was a Marine barracks in about 1830, built by the Navy. The glasses covered in dust are still on the bar and the pool table is sitting covered in dust—I will show you the pictures—and it is, frankly, shocking that the British Government gives no money to the Ascension Island Government for repairing its heritage assets, which would be part of creating a heritage and tourism economy for that island.

I know that you made similar points before, but now that there is a blue belt commitment it must be supported, it seems to me, by sensible things. The other sensible thing is that of course for Ascension, Ascension receives no other funding from the Government because it is not deemed to be—what is the term?

**Catherine Wensink:** ODA, Overseas Development Aid.

**Charles Clover:** It doesn't receive Overseas Development Aid; it doesn't receive funding from DfID because its population is deemed to be employed and therefore not poor. But it is the same population, because the people of St Helena come to work there. They are the same people that go back there and they exist under this rather strange arrangement whereby they don't have right of abode. Let's not get into that for the moment. We could make their lives better, we can give them some



benefits back from being part of the blue belt that they are part of creating.

**Q115 Dr Matthew Offord:** Why do you feel that those benefits have not been communicated by particularly the Foreign Office to the overseas territories?

**Charles Clover:** In the case of Ascension, now people have realised, partly as a result of what we have done, what BLUE has done and others maybe have done, that not only does having a blue belt mean it opens up Government funding—and £20 million has duly appeared—but it opens up foundation funding. Indeed, we would not have had the thing designated or proposed for designation in the first place without a very senior American donor coming up with the money, because the Treasury could not bridge the gap to stop the fishing fleets coming in and get it closed. We did that with the money, so they have seen £1 million come in for enforcement and various other things, science and so on, since the proposal, since the actual closure of half of Ascension's waters.

They have seen BLUE, as a foundation, be able to go out and have a sponsored cycle ride, which brought in £150,000. Peanuts by Government standards, but we have managed to spread the love across all the environmental things. They are now seeing the science lab in the school being done up, the IT in the school done up. It is entirely justifiable, because it helps to communicate the importance of that marine area to the population. It has been rather marvellous to see that we get hundreds of letters from the schoolchildren in the Two Boats School on Ascension Island thanking us. It is very humbling. Now Ascension Islanders want to be part of that cycle ride next year. The creation of a blue belt has created a pot into which to throw money and it has not just been Government money. I think that is what has brought around four out of five of the Ascension Island councillors to think this maybe isn't such a bad idea.

**Q116 Dr Matthew Offord:** Do you see there being disparity between some of the MPAs that have been led at a local level on the Overseas Territory itself and those that have been encouraged by the Foreign Office?

**Charles Clover:** I think there is a difference in ambition.

**Catherine Wensink:** Could I just add to that? As far as we understand it, it was an internal review. We have not seen this, so we do not really believe that there has been a lot of consultation on this. It is obviously particularly top-down and that will not work, like you are saying, in Anguilla, it will not work in coastal communities. It just is not going to happen, so there has to be some feeding in of civil society into this exercise. I do not think they have done a particularly good job. This was a role that we fulfilled for a long, long time, connecting NGOs in the overseas territories with the FCO, but that relationship has kind of diminished. I do not know if that is because of high turnover within the FCO, but we would like to see that encouraged.



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You were talking about the benefits realised of marine protected areas. In the Turks and Caicos, because of the fact that they are not being effectively managed, the benefits are rarely realised. I think it is quite well-known what the benefits are, as you were saying in the previous session. Also I just wanted to say, in Gibraltar, they are not receiving the maximum economic benefits, because they have illegal incursions virtually every day into their Marine Protected Area by Spanish fishermen. That is also something I know we may discuss. So I don't think in some territories the maximum benefit is being seen.

Also a point on the lottery, I am sure the Committee is quite tired of kicking Government in doing something about this, but I just wanted to add, if we look at an example in the Dutch territories, they do have access to the People's Postcode Lottery. In fact, it is about €500,000 a year. Now, that is a huge amount of money if we are talking about the overseas territories. It was in 2005 that the Dutch Caribbean Nature Alliance, which is an NGO that helps to manage the marine parks in the Dutch territories, used the UK as an example, because they thought that we did have access to the lottery, so they used it as leverage in order to access that money. It is quite embarrassing that we have still not got anywhere 10 years later.

**Charles Clover:** I have asked why this is.

**Chair:** Can we hear from Mr Hickey, please?

**Thomas Hickey:** Just to supplement that point, I think it does depend on the territory. We have been involved with the Foreign Office working groups alongside other NGOs, but also some of the scientists, enforcement bodies and representatives of the Government themselves. There had been surprise in some quarters of the UKOTs when the policy was announced, but our experience of working with the Foreign Office is that there is an awareness that this needs to be consultative and that there is not a one size fits all approach to the policy.

To supplement the point on the economic benefits, as you have alluded to, I think on a case by case basis there is an awareness that marine protected areas can have economic benefits, be that through more sustainable fisheries revenues, tourism and scientific research. There is also a point to be made about wider ecosystem resilience. A piece of work that we are increasingly interested in is that of climate change resilience, so ahead of the expansion of the Papahānaumokuākea Marine Monument by Barack Obama in September, his chief scientific adviser, John Holdren, commissioned a piece of research on climate resilience, which I am very happy to send to the Committee afterwards, if that would be of interest.

**Chair:** Thank you.

**Thomas Hickey:** I think there is a wider point to speak to there, but I would agree with my colleagues that we should not look at marine protected areas solely through an economic lens. They cannot—pardon the pun—be assumed to be a silver bullet to the economic challenges of



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the territories. This needs to be underscored by the wider funding arrangements that my colleagues have alluded to.

**Catherine Wensink:** Just to add to that, the only sort of fund that the territories have access to at the moment is Darwin Plus, aside from the EU fund, BEST, which I am sure we will talk about. This year, in 2017, we saw more projects for the first time go towards marine projects. There was £428,000 on terrestrial and £2.6 million on marine projects, which is interesting. We have also seen more technical expertise in those projects coming from the UK, for example, with Cefas. We would like to see that available anyway, not just through project funding. We encourage this organisation to be more involved, this Government agency, but we would recognise that there still needs to be NGO projects going ahead within the Darwin Plus because they represent civil society there.

Q117 **Dr Matthew Offord:** You said about £3 million on Darwin Plus projects in the overseas territories, which contain 94% of the biodiversity?

**Catherine Wensink:** Yes. It is quite shocking. I would add that in terms of EU funds, which I am sure we will get on to, there is a funding call each year for NGOs working on live projects in the EU. I think that something like €9 million per year goes to NGOs. That is quite an interesting thing and could, with Brexit, be an opportunity to see NGOs pick up a lot of the slack when funds are low, but we need to support them as well, I would say.

Q118 **John Mc Nally:** If I may, I would like to move you on to the evidence base or more evidence base. I do quite like what you have said, Charles, about the UK Government forgetting about the overseas territories' responsibilities. Sometimes it feels a bit closer to home. However, overall biodiversity in the UK Overseas Territories is far greater than in the British Isles. To what extent do we have a full understanding of the extent of marine biodiversity in the United Kingdom Overseas Territories?

**Catherine Wensink:** I think it varies completely. I mentioned Cefas. One of our technical experts in the UK has been working in the British Virgin Islands on sea-bird mapping and collecting evidence there and also rolling that out into other territories, including Anguilla. It really varies from territory to territory how much evidence and knowledge of biodiversity is there. Maybe because we are using modern techniques now, we don't have to go through the phase of learning what the best techniques are. We can be using the best techniques now in the territories, but that technical expertise is really needed, because a lot of the territories have a really small pool of resources to pull from. That is something that is very important.

Q119 **John Mc Nally:** Are you saying that the database knowledge that we have about sea birds and the protected features are considered inadequate at the moment? Earlier on in the hearing we seemed to have information overload and then now we are hearing we don't seem to have enough information.



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**Charles Clover:** “Adequate for what?” is what I think you have to ask yourself. What is it adequate for? I think it is quite adequate enough to know that, as you rightly say, there is a lot of biodiversity there. What is the necessity? There is quite a lot of evidence. It is a bit of a curate’s egg, as Catherine says, throughout different territories. I think the Caribbean ones are quite different, but in South Georgia—the UK has spent a lot of time on science there—in the Falklands ditto, in Ascension recently ditto, there is enough to know where your marine protected areas should arguably go. What is the need that you are trying to be adequate to?

**Thomas Hickey:** I would entirely echo that point. It is a question of imperative. Pew have supported a number of scientific expeditions around Tristan da Cunha, Pitcairn, South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands. We can always have more science, but the point has been made that—Catherine may correct me—there are 33,000 different species and 1,500 endemics; the UK, through the UK Overseas Territories—I think this is fantastic—is custodian to a third of the world’s penguins. The question really should be what do we know with science and I think we can say three things. One is that some of these places, albeit they differ, are remarkable; that we know, through science, that the health, productivity and diversity of our seas is in decline; and thirdly that science tells us MPAs are a good way of arresting that decline. Within that context, I would agree with Charles that it somewhat depends what question we are asking.

**Charles Clover:** In setting the boundaries of proposed MPAs, such as Ascension, it would be helpful to know the migration patterns of the principal target species for fisheries like tuna, because if you are trying to conserve the tuna as well as all the rest of the biodiversity, you need to conserve quite a lot of it. If the tuna is just going through in a stripe, you want to conserve some of that stripe. There is more work to be done, but I think we know enough to know that these are pretty remarkable places, they are holding down pretty remarkable pieces of ocean. But I think your question may derive from the rather stale debate that we have had in the UK about—

Q120 **Chair:** No, the actual question is not linked to the UK. It is about the fact that we report into the UN on biodiversity loss, so how can we report on whether or not we have halted biodiversity loss if we don’t know what we are protecting? Looking across to what the United States is doing, we have remotely-operated vehicles that can do some of that deep-sea monitoring, but that is obviously not something, at £20,000 a day, that any of your organisations can undertake. The question is: is this necessary for our Government to undertake? Are we missing a trick? I think that is more the line of questioning. I don’t know if you sat in on the previous session. The evidence issue did come up. This is about responding to the United Nations on biodiversity loss and looking at what other countries are doing. How do we know what we are protecting if we do not know what is there? We have called it a protected area, but we don’t know if our measures are protecting it.





**Charles Clover:** There are many fora, and we are probably going to get on to this at some point on the Brexit argument, but there are many things in which Britain could be playing a larger role. One of them is the regional fisheries management organisations, which basically run the seas, insofar as anybody does. At ICCAT they are very good, but incomplete in terms of providing a database for the full extent of biodiversity. But insofar as we look at what is there, we look at what fish are there. There is quite inadequate information on St Helena as to what is a sustainable tuna catch, given that we have a proposed IUCN VI sustainable fishing reserve there. I am going there to try to find out what we know and what we don't know and what we should know, because I think it is possible there to have a low-volume, high-value fishery, which they do not have at the moment, which could support St Helena for having that reserve. But we need more science there, definitely. Some is being done for ICCAT, but I don't think enough.

**Catherine Wensink:** I said it varies from territory to territory. Some territories just do not have any baseline information. For example, on Montserrat we helped facilitate some work with the Waitt Institute, recognising that there were no resources, very little technical expertise on-island. The Waitt Institute has come in and is conducting a marine scientific assessment. Most notably, they have been doing extensive community consultations on Montserrat and they consider from the data that it probably is being over-fished. They are working with the community to look at scenarios of protected areas, but this is literally a very small organisation that has listened to the people on Montserrat, listened to the fact that they want someone to come in and help them manage their marine resources.

We have put them in touch with people who are able to do that, whereas the resources that they are putting in there, the UK Government, they are way more than any sort of operating budget of the agencies that are working in the territories, for example, JNCC. It is a significant resource, but it is something that we have done by listening to the territory there and acting on their request for help. Like I say, I think it varies, because there was not really much information on Montserrat about their marine resources. Yes, how can we report on how well they are doing if there is just no information there? That is just one example.

**Chair:** Thank you, that is helpful.

Q121 **Kerry McCarthy:** Tom, you mentioned the satellite monitoring system that you have in place or that has been piloted in Pitcairn. Where do we go from now? What sort of resources would need to be devoted to put that in place as permanent monitoring?

Also, it is not just obviously about finding out what is going on and monitoring, it is about enforcing if there is illegal action. Once I had a demonstration of it, and I think at that time we were talking a figure of about—and this was before Pitcairn was being designated—£500,000 a year.



**Thomas Hickey:** I would have to come back to you, to be honest, on an exact figure for Pitcairn, but broadly speaking, the point was that the trial around Pitcairn was conducted when the technology was still developing, so it was rolled into the start-up costs and the acquisition of data and what have you. But broadly speaking, yes, the point was that this monitoring platform can be far cheaper and arguably far more effective than the sole presence of physical enforcement assets. That is to say not that it should supplant physical enforcement assets, but that it can supplement and complement them.

Just to set the picture for the Committee, 10 years ago I think the case was being made, “Why should we protect the seas better; for what reason should we be doing better conservation?”—no more so than the man to my left—but now the question that comes from the Committee and Government is always, “How can we do this?” It was with that in mind that we developed this platform in conjunction with the Satellite Applications Catapult centre. It was formally known as the Virtual Watch Room, it is now called Eyes on the Seas, and it does the monitoring side of things. It does not purport to address the slightly more thorny question of enforcement, but by combining multiple datasets, some of which are voluntarily transmitted by fishing operators but also optical and other radar shots, it provides you with a picture of what is going on and then tries to corroborate that with databases as to fishing licences, vessel registries, etc. With that picture, we would argue that Government and enforcement agencies have a far greater volume of actionable intelligence.

Your question then I think is, “What action do they take?” That is certainly a question that we would like to hear more from Government on, but also one that we acknowledge there is no singular answer to. The monitoring of an area really acts as a tripwire for further investigation and a variety of different actions, but we would argue that in this instance, the best shouldn’t be the enemy of the good. We have certainly the capacity to have a far better understanding of what is going on in our seas. It is worth stressing that we haven’t had that. It is presumed that we know who is doing what where, and fundamentally the sea is so vast that that is not actually the case. This is a huge step forward in our ability to provide answers.

Q122 **Kerry McCarthy:** Again, I go back a few years: I was told that there was an amazing film, which I think anybody who doubts why you would want to protect these waters, you just had to see the footage of what they were finding in the exploratory missions around Pitcairn. I think there are four Pitcairn islands, and back then three of them were pretty much pristine, but there were already signs that over-fishing was beginning to have an impact around the one that was closest to civilisation, if you want to put it that way. Has the satellite monitoring picked up that this is starting to have an impact? Has it got worse over the few years that you have been looking at that?



**Thomas Hickey:** I should be clear that Pew supports the monitoring of Pitcairn, but the other work that Catapult is engaged with, that is proprietary information between the Foreign Office and Catapult, so the questions would have to be directed to them. But in terms of Pitcairn, the trial area showed that it was an area of relatively high compliance, that the majority of commercial fishing activity takes place to the north-east of the EEZ. As I understand, we have had no information throughout the monitoring to suggest anything different.

One interesting point that we can share with the Committee is that throughout the trial period, following the announcement of the intention to designate, I believe it was observed that some vessels actually started circumnavigating the EEZ. Now, they have a perfectly legal right of passage to go through the EEZ, but there is a point there about deterrence and about how enforcement need not necessarily have to equate to prosecution or fines; good enforcement can equate to compliance. So back to my point of the best not being the enemy of the good, the fact that we have this capacity now—and indeed, the UK can quite rightly claim to be pioneering this work—it can have huge impacts in the blue belt, but also more broadly.

Q123 **Kerry McCarthy:** In terms of rolling this out to other areas, you said that Turks and Caicos do not even have petrol to go out in their boats. Is this the best system? I suppose it depends how populated an area is and to what extent there are people that can go out and enforce, but in terms of the remote areas, is satellite monitoring the answer?

**Thomas Hickey:** There are probably two answers there. One is that it is not the sole platform out there. There are other platforms that will provide you with pictures of AIS; Automatic Information System. If you are a large seafood retailer and you know that you are getting your supply from 12 specific vessels who are assumed to always be broadcasting on AIS, then an alternative platform may be perfectly adequate to do your due diligence. But Eyes on the Seas differs insofar as it offers a more holistic package. To give you an example, three vessels could be observed within an EEZ, all of which are transmitting their AIS. You then take an optical shot, or a synthetic aperture radar shot, and it transpires there are five vessels there. Well, what are the other two vessels doing?

If you are looking for a monitoring platform for this enforcement, we would argue that it is a good step forward. In terms of is it being used more broadly, the Catapult have just won a contract with the Foreign Office to do a baselining exercise with six other territories, those that have either established or stated an intention to establish an MPA. I might need your help here: this is St Helena, Tristan, South Georgia, South Sandwich Islands, Pitcairn, British Indian Ocean Territory and Ascension Island. That is a piece of work that is partly historical analysis. It is also partly ongoing monitoring to try to baseline the level of activity there and what future monitoring plans might look like.



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The final point to add in terms of is this being rolled out, the platform was never conceived solely to monitor marine protected areas. The idea was that this would complement a piece of work we are doing more broadly called the Ending Illegal Fishing Project. It is also being employed by the Governments of Chile and Thailand at the moment for slightly different purposes. Again, I would probably like to discuss with colleagues before sharing any detail, but very happy to follow up with the Committee if that would be of use.

**Charles Clover:** In addition to that, could I just say that—in a rather sort of bottom-up way—BLUE has been helping Bermuda and Bermuda is now ahead of the Foreign Office’s assessment of what has been going on in these OT waters, because it has completed its contract with Catapult to look at three years of what has been going on, with a view to deciding how much enforcement activity it needs to put in there. I am not at liberty to say what is in it, but I just flag it up, that at some point this year it is entirely conceivable that the Bermuda Government might publish that and discuss it.

It is a very good thing to have done, because they really did not know what was going on in their waters, which some people thought were not very fished and some people thought there was evidence that there were both longliners and purse seiners dipping into the EEZ. This will sort that out. They will have the means: they are a fiercely protective, democratic OT, the nearest thing to a fully-fledged democracy in all of the OTs, and so we must leave it with them. But we are very proud of having enabled them to do that and found a funder in Bermuda.

**Catherine Wensink:** It would be interesting to know about the consultation on this with all of the OTs. You were just saying that six are involved in this rolling out. It would be interesting to know if the other OTs had been engaged in that, because it is a responsibility: the national security, illegal poaching, and even illegal immigration in the example of TCI is a security issue and is a UK responsibility, so that would be quite interesting to know that.

Q124 **Kerry McCarthy:** Do you know what the US history is of the designation of their affected areas? Are they using satellite technology?

**Thomas Hickey:** In part, yes. So it varies, but a combination of satellite monitoring and physical enforcement methods.

Q125 **Kerry McCarthy:** This is going totally off script, Chair, if you would indulge me a second, but with the Global Oceans Commission having done its work, and John Kerry and Obama, who have both been very good on marine protection, it has become very much an issue that is talked about and on the political agenda in a way that it was not five years ago. I think the UK has got to take some credit for that as well. Do you worry that it will lose its momentum now that those key drivers are not in place anymore?



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**Thomas Hickey:** I hope not. It is probably a question of how you frame it. I would agree that we have seen huge progress in the last couple of years, but the fact remains, we are still—figures vary—between 4% to 6% of the world designated as marine protected areas, which is well short of the 10% target we have subscribed to.

I think it is probably a question of framing. I understand the inference in your question. It is probably important to say that marine protected areas and tackling illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, the environmental case for doing that, and the biodiversity case are well understood. But there is also a food security point. There is a point of economics too. There is a point of geopolitical regional security. If you remove the livelihood of young men with boats, looking around parts of Africa, then slightly less savoury occupations become necessary. Illegal fishing, it is estimated, costs anywhere between \$10 billion and \$23 billion a year.

So the imperative can be justified through environmental, economic, social —indeed, there is increasing understanding and literature about how illegal fishing can involve human rights abuses. I think it is raising this awareness that there are a number of very rational reasons to be tackling illegal fishing.

**Charles Clover:** On your point about, is the momentum going to run out of this, we do not just depend upon the United States for that momentum. The UK's commitment is larger than President Obama's. We are slightly blushing violets about it. We need to be slightly less blushing about it because it is a monumental thing to have achieved if we do achieve it. The other thing is that there is a long way to go to get this to work, and to work out how it would work for various territories in different ways. There is 10 years' work here.

But also, I should just say that the freeing of the logjam around Antarctica with the consensus decision to declare a marine protected area in the Ross Sea—it has been going on for seven years or something—creates lots of opportunities for more areas around Antarctica and for the IIED target to be met. This would be the marine target. We are on four to six. I think it is six if you count in all the proposals. But we are not going to be far off it if we try hard.

So there is momentum here because, in terrestrial terms, we have not got a prayer of stopping the destruction that is going on, which I think is in the target as well, or even halving it by 2020. That is not going to happen. This might happen and it is very exciting. Nothing succeeds like success.

**Catherine Wensink:** To add to that, we are leading the world in some areas, in British Antarctic Territory for example, with BAS. Why we do not have that high level of ambition for all of our territories is unknown, but I think, yes, we should have that same level of ambition. Professor Callum Roberts was saying that about the UK domestic marine protected areas



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and that rung home with me—yes, we should have that same level of ambition for the territories as well.

**Kerry McCarthy:** We have got the sustainable development goal as well, which hopefully would provide another driver.

Q126 **Chair:** Before we move on, can I just ask about your satellite technology? With British Foreign Office, British Catapult technology being used thousands of miles away, is it used here in UK domestic waters, is there any push to, or could it work?

**Thomas Hickey:** I do not know of any reason that it could not work. I am not aware that it is being applied to the UK's domestic—just to clarify the minefield of acronyms, the Satellite Applications Catapult Centre is one of eight innovation centres set up by the Government about five years ago.

**Chair:** I know what Catapult is.

**Thomas Hickey:** I am sorry. We partnered with the Satellite Applications Catapult Centre in 2013. It is a separate entity that is contracted by the Foreign Office to do the monitoring, rather than being an NDPB at the Foreign Office or the like.

**Chair:** So they pay them a fee?

**Thomas Hickey:** Yes.

**Chair:** That is helpful, thank you.

**Charles Clover:** I am not aware of it being used for marine protected areas, but I am aware of supermarkets using it. Supermarkets use technology very like Catapult if not Catapult, because Catapult have talked to me about this, to track their shipments. Because, if they are doing just in time deliveries, they want to know where the heck that wine in the middle of the Atlantic is, and how many days off Plymouth or wherever it is. But that is the only use I am aware of.

Q127 **Chair:** Satellite technology is nothing new. The UK has got Catapult to roll it out. The question is, given that we are rolling it out in our marine protected areas overseas, what is stopping us rolling it out for monitoring and enforcement in the UK? You do not know is the answer.

**Charles Clover:** Good question.

**Chair:** Thank you, that is helpful.

Q128 **Joan Ryan:** The result of the EU referendum may also affect marine protected areas in overseas territories, so I wondered if you could say something about the impact you think that result might be likely to have on MPAs, and what action the Government needs to take?

**Charles Clover:** There is a negative one and there is a positive one. Do you want to do the negative one?





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**Catherine Wensink:** Yes. I think, in your recent evidence on the impact of the referendum, you mentioned the 10 years of lobbying to the EU for funding for biodiversity in the overseas territories that we had been involved with, and it was particularly pleasing that many of the on the ground conservation bodies in the territories have received significant funding from that in the three calls that there have been.

It is a big unknown, isn't it, what is going to happen with this BEST funding. I would not say the UK has been particularly engaged in that process, and the European Commission, on several occasions that I have attended meetings, have been quite frustrated with the UK Government just being in the room when they are having the discussions about BEST, so I cannot see them being particularly obliging.

Q129 **Chair:** Is that Defra or FCO Ministers?

**Catherine Wensink:** I think, with it being within the EU, FCO particularly. I know that they on occasions have attended meetings, but in terms of French Government attendance, it has been very low. Yes, I guess it is just a big unknown. We do not know what is going to happen.

**Charles Clover:** It is a million a year. BEST is a million a year for the overseas territories, coming from the EU to our overseas territories. It is a lot more for other people's overseas territories. Unless it is replaced, be quite clear about this, the French and Dutch overseas territories will have a funding mechanism and ours will not. It is that simple.

Q130 **Joan Ryan:** Are you saying that the Government should commit to replacing this BEST funding?

**Charles Clover:** Absolutely. Yes. We will be really—

**Joan Ryan:** Under this impact?

**Charles Clover:** Our overseas territories will be lost without this money. There is also another issue about LIFE. LIFE is a large fund, I do not know, but somebody can look it up, for environmental projects, large amount projects. The overseas territories were included in the preamble to the regulation, but they have never received any money from LIFE. I do not think that is right, and I think that there will have to be a replacement for LIFE funding.

Q131 **Chair:** Even though it does not exist?

**Charles Clover:** Well, no, it exists in very large measure in the UK. I am putting in a bid for the overseas territories to get it when it is replaced in the UK, because there was no sensible reason why the overseas territories did not get it before.

Q132 **Chair:** You are assuming LIFE will be replaced in the UK?

**Charles Clover:** I am hoping LIFE will be replaced in the UK. I think you will find the terrestrial NGOs will be wailing and caterwauling if it is not. That is one of their—



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**Chair:** We have just done a report on what will or will not be replaced, and nobody knows.

**Charles Clover:** That is one of their big asks, if you ask the Wildlife Trust. The positive—if it is a positive and I think it is a positive—from the Brexit question is that we must not forget that we have been hiding behind the EU in our marine competences for a long time, and we have therefore been giving in to the demands of two most rapacious fishing fleets within the EU, France and Spain, and we have not been playing the role we should have been playing on regional fisheries management organisations, such as ICCAT.

I remember from the campaign that we had to save the bluefin tuna after the film we made called “The End of the Line”, that Britain was completely pusillanimous on ICCAT and as NGOs we had to go and campaign there because Britain wasn’t, and eventually Richard Benyon as Minister got rather fed up with this and got us to do a little bit more.

But Defra does not routinely, even necessarily, attend, and scientists and agents will be put to these things, and they do not have an agenda. If you ask people, for example, around the Indian Ocean in South Africa, our friends and colleagues from South Africa, they wish we would take much more of a positive line on the dwindling stocks of tuna in the Indian Ocean, from which Britain gets most of its tuna. Most of the stuff that comes in in tins, comes from the Indian Ocean.

Our consumers would like this to be well-managed, and Britain has been hiding behind France and Spain, who are catching too much of it. This is mad. If we wish to put forward the opportunities that we should be seizing under Brexit, it is that Britain can exert more soft power in the world to get the oceans managed better across vast areas, by staffing up and thinking about its commitment to regional fisheries management organisations, not least the one that is based in London.

Q133 **Joan Ryan:** So the negative, that we are hiding behind France and Spain, could be turned into a positive?

**Charles Clover:** Exactly.

**Joan Ryan:** But may not?

**Charles Clover:** But may not be. These are decisions that will have to be taken very soon by this Government, as to whether to staff this up, whether to spend money on it, or whether to cut Defra to the bone and not worry about the environment. Well, the world’s seas are a vast amount of the environment and how we could—as the Foreign Secretary calls it, global Britain—exert power as global Britain to manage the world better, is to staff up the science and policy of the regional fisheries management organisations with our overseas territories. Because, of course, Gibraltar wants us to; Bermuda wants us to; St Helena wants us to. Ascension does not have the staff to send anybody to, but it is pillaged by fleets that are allegedly managed by ICCAT.



**Q134 Peter Aldous:** I think you have articulated a tremendous opportunity that the UK has to be a marine protection pioneer. Have you put that case that you have put so strongly to Government, and what response have you had?

**Charles Clover:** We did meet Baroness Anelay the other day, and listened and smiled, but she did not say no. But we will be hoping to get to the Foreign Secretary about it, because I think he might like this idea. It is a very positive one for all parties to beat the Government up about, because I think there is a real opportunity here.

**Thomas Hickey:** I agree with Charles's point that there are a range of international fora that the UK is currently represented through the EU delegations. That is not to necessarily criticise the efforts of those EU delegations at present, but to say, in these changed political times, the UK will nominally and possibly become an independent actor.

It is worth stressing that the UK internationally has a pretty good reputation on marine conservation and, to Charles's point entirely, in the context of global Britain and the UK's standing as it redefines its relationship with the European Union, there are a number of opportunities within specific fora.

Another one I would probably mention is the UN process on the high seas and the implementing agreement to establish marine protected areas. This is a very longwinded process, but there are moves afoot to establish an implementing agreement through which marine protected areas can be established in the high seas. At present, the high seas are principally governed by regional fisheries management organisations, and many lack the legal mechanism to establish marine protected areas. If we are seeking to identify fora in which the UK could play a proactive role, that UN process is a key one.

The other dimension in which I think the UK can have a positive impact is back to this technology side of things. So, at Lomé in October of last year, the African Union held an extraordinary summit on maritime security, and within that summit, satellite data tracking was identified as a capacity with which states would like to see more support with tackling IUU. As we have discussed earlier, the UK is pretty well placed to furnish that need, so there is an opportunity on the global stage to take some of this technology and capacity and support these global challenges.

**Charles Clover:** I think you said something which is very, very important, which is that if we do not do this, these blue belts will fail, because the fish that are in them, even the largest ones, migrate across whole oceans, and the oceans are dwindling. The wild fish catch, if you listen to the figures produced this year by the University of British Columbia and their Seas Around Us project, Daniel Pauly, the wild catch is declining at 2 million tonnes a year since 1996. That is because we are overfishing the oceans.



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These quite big pools of water around our overseas territories will be denuded perforce if we do not participate in the management of the seas as a whole. That is an incredibly important thing for us to do.

**Chair:** We are going to move on very quickly to Gibraltar.

- Q135 **Joan Ryan:** Perhaps Catherine could tell us what the likely impact of the decision to leave will be on the MPAs around Gibraltar, particularly given you have already talked about incursions from Spain, Spain's attitude to British Government territorial waters, and their acting with impunity.

**Catherine Wensink:** The Committee had a very comprehensive written statement from the Gibraltar Government and we stand by them completely in what they have said in that.

One thing that we have been facilitating at the request of the Gibraltar Government is to sit down with NGOs in the UK to see what their impressions are of protected areas management, and that is something that we will continue to do and continue to follow in this process of big unknowns.

So not really much to add to Gibraltar's written evidence, other than to mention the recommendation that they join the ICCAT, as you were saying, and the Barcelona Convention as well. These are requests from the Gibraltar Government that we should be helping them with and standing by them because—

- Q136 **Joan Ryan:** What should we be doing then? Their request that we help them with, what does that mean in practical terms?

**Catherine Wensink:** I think it is more political support. They have the technical and the resources that they need, but it is the political support that they need from the UK Government, because Spain can misbehave when it comes to Gibraltar, and the EU was something that helped in that debate.

- Q137 **Joan Ryan:** So we need to see some action from the UK Government?

**Catherine Wensink:** Yes, I think so. This was even before the EU referendum happened anyway, so now more than ever we need to be there for Gibraltar.

**Joan Ryan:** Absolutely. Thank you.

- Q138 **Chair:** Before we close, I just want to take you back to your response to Matthew's question on the issue around tourism and Ascension, and the inability of flying in. The British taxpayer has just spent £285 million building an airport in St Helena. Would you feel confident landing there?

**Charles Clover:** I have been briefed by, is it called Atlantic Star, the people who fly—

**Chair:** Yes.



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**Charles Clover:** —into the city airport. I think, having spoken to them, that I would. This is going to unlock itself. I think maybe we are being a bit health and safety about this.

I certainly would not want to go in on a wide-body jet, because I spoke to somebody who had been on that plane that went around three times. She was the Deputy Governor of Bermuda and she was not very comfortable. She said that the first two times they were quite nonchalant about it. The third time, it was white knuckle run.

There is enormous potential in that small aircraft option that, frankly, is better than the wide-body jet thing because it means that they will have to have somewhere to fly on to if they cannot land there, and that will have to be Ascension. So, perforce, there will have to be some commercial aircraft landing in Ascension, and then the question will arise and you might want to ask it, why not just make that a regular flight? This is a fantastic opportunity. You cannot land at Tristan da Cunha, but you can land in Ascension and St Helena.

Q139 **Chair:** Do you think it will resolve itself?

**Charles Clover:** Yes, I do.

Q140 **Chair:** Are you aware of any funding streams coming on, either through DfID or through the United Nations Climate Funds? Is there any work going on at UN level?

**Charles Clover:** I am not aware of that. I think there should be some. That is a very good question to be asking. Because they are thinking about Government funding, and it is their job to think about Government funding, MPs don't always think about the creation of these things, these protections—the strategy basis and the ambition at a high level—both in the UK and these overseas territories, which means that other people can bring in money, and that other people will bring in money because they have a confident expectation. In my parish in the Dedham Vale, we are an AONB. It makes East Anglia money. St Helena will make St Helenians money because it is a marine reserve.

If I might just put in a plug for something that we have been doing as BLUE in Lyme Bay. The marine protected areas that we have around the UK are, in the words of one of our trustees, Callum Roberts, all pretty bad, worse than nothing, he says. What you have to do, because there is no management plan, as Rodney Anderson has just been saying, is put together an alliance of people to write a management plan, to create a vision and create funding.

We have done that in Lyme Bay. We have created more money for fishermen than they were earning before. By fishing less, we have made them 25% to 30% more money out of a scheme called "Reserved seafood", because it has provenance and it has data, which are the two things that fish does not normally have and enables you to sell it at London restaurants because they will buy it if it has provenance and



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sustainability and traceability. Otherwise they are worried about it, and price is not the point.

Q141 **Chair:** Have you told us about that in your evidence?

**Charles Clover:** Have I?

**Chair:** If you can send it through to us, because we really need to wrap up the session.

**Charles Clover:** We are trying to do that now in St Helena.

**Catherine Wensink:** Just to say that DfID do put money into the Darwin Plus and the International Climate Fund would be very interested to know whether projects for the overseas territories are going to be included in that, because they will face some of the worst impacts of climate change. I would be really interested to know about that, because that is quite a big pot of money.

**Chair:** Massive. Okay, thank you all very much indeed. That is very helpful.