

Written evidence from Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC): Supplementary Evidence (PAE0026)

Committee staff sent follow up questions to the JNCC stemming from their initial submission to the Committee's protected areas inquiry ([PAE0021](#)). The questions from Committee staff are set out in **bold**, the JNCC's responses are in normal text.

1. Your initial written evidence submission makes reference the following two statistics.

- **(Page 7) *This means protected areas cover 27.8% of land and 38.2% of seas across the UK.***
- **(Page 8) *10.6% of land coverage is designated specifically for biodiversity or conservation of specific features e.g. A/SSSI, SAC, SPA, Ramsar, NNR (i.e. excluding landscape scale site types such as AONBs).***

Would you be able to provide the same information but as it relates to England rather than the whole of the UK? So protected areas cover what % of English land and sea? And what % land coverage is designated specifically for biodiversity or conservation in England?

We provided statistics for protected areas coverage at UK level. The equivalent figures for England (as of 31st March 2022) are as follows:

- 26.4% of land covered by a protected area designation
- 40.3% of sea covered by a protected area designation
- When excluding landscape scale site types, the land coverage in England is 6.5%

This information is published in the C1 UK Biodiversity Indicator (<https://jncc.gov.uk/our-work/ukbi-c1-protected-areas/>) where more background information is available on the figures.

2. Can we confirm that the italicised text below from your initial submission describing the 'sentinel site' approach of monitoring change in 9 MPAs and then extrapolating the data is an approach that is currently happening rather than a recommendation for a future approach?

"JNCC undertake approximately two offshore MPA surveys per year, working closely with vessel providers (such as Cefas) to secure slots and support from their technical specialists to ensure monitoring can take place. In order to detect statistically significant change over time, sites need to be re-visited at a certain frequency; under the current funding arrangements JNCC are only able to monitor at the desired frequency to detect change

9 of our offshore MPAs from a total list of 76. These 9 can be considered 'sentinel sites' in that findings from monitoring both will tell us about what's happening/changing at that particular site as a result of management intervention, but the sites have been selected in such a way as to be able to use the findings from these sentinel sites and extrapolate them to improving our understanding of other sites across the network; e.g. where similar combination of features are protected, similar management regimes are being put in place/are in place and/or they are representative of sites within the same broad geographical location."

The approach of ensuring we have sufficient survey frequency to detect change at 9 of our off-shore MPAs (the 'sentinel site' approach) is our current approach as opposed to a recommendation for the future; we currently monitor 2 sites per year to achieve this. We note this approach is designed to obtain the most useful information within the limited resources available. If greater resources were available we would consider adjusting our monitoring activity to allow us to increase the confidence of our assessment of the condition of the MPAs across the UK.

3. Page 14 of your initial submission states:

"(Page 14 of the JNCC response) A sub-group of the 4CBG, the Habitats Regulations and International Sites Management Group is led by Defra and involves the four countries' governments and SNCBs to collaborate on matters relating to the National Site Network (SACs and SPAs), Ramsar sites and Bern Convention Emerald Network."

How often does this group (the Habitats Regulations and International Sites Management Group) meet?

The HARIS Management Group meets 3-4 times a year.