

MPA 10056

4 October 2013

Marine Protected Areas (MPAs)

This is an individual response to the Planning Scotland's seas MPA Consultation.

I agree that MPAs are needed to protect Scotland's marine wildlife which should include seabirds. Seabirds may be protected whilst they are standing on land but they are dependent, particularly for feeding their young, on the produce of the sea and principally sandeels. The lack of sandeels locally has been a key cause in the decline in seabird populations during the last ten or more years. The Government is legally required to create an "ecologically coherent" network of MPAs. The network is not coherent if there are not protected areas for the key food of seabirds. Research has shown that some seabirds are regularly flying many miles in order to obtain suitable food. Would members wish to travel to Newcastle every time they needed to fill their larders?

The Government should be aware of the tourist attraction of seabird colonies. Bass Rock and the Isle of May, Lamb and Fidsa locally, as well as the northern isles, viz Orkney and Shetland, are real tourist attractions. Boat trips from N. Berwick to Bass Rock and Crustathie, to the Isle of May are well supported. The Seabird Centre at North Berwick is also well visited and Dunbar has breeding kittiwakes.

It is, therefore important that the proposed Firth of Forth Banks complex MPA should be designated in accordance with the recommendation of the Joint Nature Conservancy Council and Scottish Natural Heritage and the protection of sea birds and sandeels should be included in the Firth of Forth MPA to ensure an ecologically coherent network. Local Authorities are already having to deal with Lesser Black backed Gulls invading residential areas and Princes Street Gardens for easy food.