

Marine Bill Newsletter



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The Marine Bill is a first for the UK. It will provide for the protection of our seas and will enhance our ability to balance the pressures on them. And it will create a healthier, productive and more biologically diverse marine environment.

The draft Marine Bill was published for Parliamentary scrutiny and for public consultation to ensure that the provisions are as good as possible before the draft Bill is introduced. It is vital that we get this important piece of legislation right to set a clear direction for managing our seas for the future. On Thursday 25 September, the Government published its response to the reports on pre-legislative scrutiny of the draft Marine Bill by a Joint Committee of MPs and Lords, and by the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Select Committee on the draft Bill's coastal access provisions. We are very grateful to both Parliamentary Committees for their careful examination of the draft Bill. The public consultation exercise has shown us once again the significant support there is for the draft Bill across a wide range of stakeholders.

More than 14,000 people, campaigners and organisations responded to the draft Bill, including 11,000 Ramblers' Association members who wrote in support of the coastal access provisions, and 3,500 members of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, International Fund for Animal Welfare and Friends of the Earth who wrote in support of the Bill generally.

The recommendations from the Parliamentary Committees and the views received during the public consultation will help to improve and refine the draft Bill as we prepare for introduction to Parliament. We are very grateful to all the individuals and organisations who have contributed to the development of this legislation and look forward to their continued support throughout the passage of the Bill.



We have now published a full summary of the responses received and this can be found at

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/consult/marinebill/summary-responses.pdf>

The Government's response sets out how we intend to take forward the measures set out in the draft Bill in light of the issues raised in the public consultation and the recommendations that emerged from pre-legislative scrutiny. It includes our response to the issues raised on the impact assessment published with the draft Bill and the Government's response to each of the recommendations made by the Parliamentary Committees. A copy of this response can be found at: <http://www.official-documents.gov.uk/document/cm74/7422/7422.asp>



Taking Forward the Bill

Subject to Parliamentary time, we intend to further develop the draft Bill in the following ways:

- Establish a new organisation, the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) to deliver marine functions in the waters around England and in the UK offshore area (for matters that are not devolved) which we will ensure is properly resourced and has a clear and unambiguous purpose.
- Take forward the proposed new marine planning system including through amending the draft Bill to introduce a requirement on policy authorities to periodically review the Marine Planning Statement (MPS); make the MPS subject to a similar Parliamentary process as National Policy Statements; and ensure marine plan authorities are under an obligation to ensure compatibility with terrestrial plans;
- improve the provisions on licensing by requiring each appropriate licensing authority to establish an appeals mechanism and setting out detailed transitional arrangements;
- amend the draft Bill parts relating to Nature Conservation in various ways to provide greater clarity and certainty, including through conferring a statutory duty on Ministers to designate Marine Conservation Zones and setting out other functions and responsibilities on the face of the Bill;
- continue with our plans to strengthen the management of marine fisheries, including by replacing Sea Fisheries Committees with newly created Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities and to modernise powers for the licensing and management of migratory and freshwater fisheries;
- streamline and modernise enforcement powers ensuring enforcement officers are appropriately trained; provide a power to establish an appeals process for statutory

notices under the licensing provisions; and provide guidance that the maximum level of fixed monetary penalty will be capped at £5,000;

- ➔ place a duty on Secretary of State and Natural England to secure a long distance route and land available for open-air recreation, including through amending the draft Bill to require Natural England to conduct a review of early implementation and to report to Parliament after 10 years.

Next Steps

The Government published a Green Paper on 14 May 2008 which detailed the draft legislative programme for the next session, 2008-09. The Marine Bill was included in this draft legislative programme. The introduction of the Bill remains, however, subject to the availability of Parliamentary time.

Other news

Natural England's Undersea Landscapes Campaign

Despite the fact that around 20 million seaside trips are taken in England every year and 60% of us have something at home brought back from a trip to the beach, what's under the waves has remained a closed book to most of the public. In a recent quantitative public poll undertaken by Natural England (Natural England Research Report, NERR019, available to download at www.naturalengland.org.uk) it was found that:

- 99% of respondents could not name a single feature or creature associated with undersea landscapes

- 44% thought the undersea is utterly, generally or mostly barren in their region,
- only 10% expected it to have a rich mix of undersea landscapes including plants, animals and features special to the region

On land, each region has its own special landscape variety such as the North and South Downs, the Surrey Heaths, the Chilterns and Cotswolds, or the Fells of the Lake District. Underwater, our regional coasts also have their own distinctive wildlife places, yet only a few divers, some fishermen and a few scientists have any idea that these undersea landscapes exist.

The market research undertaken by Natural England has identified the most effective communications channels to use to raise public awareness of undersea landscapes and wildlife so that there is more support for and understanding of marine conservation measures and Marine Protected Areas in particular.

The Natural England campaign will show people the diversity of undersea landscapes – our rocky granite reefs, chasms and deep holes, sand plains and hills, undersea cliffs and caves, our seagrass meadows and kelp forests - through imaginative and popular imagery, interactive activities for families, events, media and on-line information. The centrepiece of the



Natural England

campaign will be the Undersea Landscapes Explorer – a ‘submersible experience’ which combines undersea imagery with motion - to enable people to take a virtual journey around our English seas without getting their feet wet! Natural England has also designed a series of maps which show the beauty and variety of England’s undersea landscapes to encourage people to find out more about the richness of their local marine habitats and wildlife.

Natural England intends to run more marine-themed events throughout the country in 2009. To find out more, and to download all the regional maps, visit: www.naturalengland.org.uk/campaigns/marine

Further information on the Marine Bill is available:

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