

## Marine Protected Areas Science Advisory Panel

# FACTSHEET

October 2010



### **Appointment of the Science Advisory Panel (SAP)**

The Panel was appointed by the Secretary of State on 1 December 2009 to assist in the work of selecting Marine Conservation Zones (MCZs) that will contribute to an ecologically coherent UK network of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs). The Panel has been appointed until July 2011, based on working 25 days a year. It is an independent body comprising expert marine scientists, established to provide objective scientific assessment of site proposals made by the four regional MCZ projects against criteria and guidance provided by the Statutory Conservation Bodies, and to provide independent scientific advice to Ministers. At the final stage of the process, the Panel Chairman will report to the Secretary of State to help her make an informed decision on where and if the MCZ sites should be implemented. Panel members have been drawn from a diverse range of marine scientific disciplines in order to ensure a balanced and comprehensive skill set.

### **Meet the Panel**

#### **Chairman: Dr Peter Ryder**

A physicist who has worked primarily in the fields of operational meteorology, and oceanography, Dr Ryder is a former Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Operations of the Met Office, where he spent most of his career. He has extensive experience in chairing executive and advisory committees.

#### **Panel members:**

#### **Professor Juliet Brodie - Natural History Museum, London**

Professor Brodie is a marine algae specialist, and she has extensive knowledge of the taxonomy, distribution and importance of algae and the activities which impact upon it. She has over 25 years experience as a marine scientist, and her work has included the identification of sites of importance for seaweed and other algae.

#### **Professor Michael Elliott - University of Hull**

Specialising in estuary and coastal science and management, Professor Elliott has worked for 35 years as a marine scientist. He has been involved in many initiatives in the marine field both in the UK and elsewhere during this time, providing advice to many organisations, agencies and government departments, particularly regarding the environmental effects of coastal and estuarine activities and the management of those impacts.

### **Dr. Jason Hall-Spencer - University of Plymouth**

Dr Hall-Spencer is a lecturer in marine biology at the University of Plymouth, with a strong track record in providing input to the selection of MPAs, particularly in areas beyond 12 nautical miles from the coast. He also has personal experience of working on fishing vessels throughout Europe and a history of working within coastal communities.

### **Dr. Keith Hiscock - Marine Biological Association, Plymouth**

Four decades of marine biological survey and of using science to support conservation have given Dr Hiscock a wealth of knowledge relevant to the work of the SAP. After leading programmes within the nature conservation agencies, he established the Marine Life Information Network at the Marine Biological Association in 1998 and is now an Associate Fellow there.

### **Professor Michel Kaiser - University of Bangor**

Professor Kaiser has undertaken world-leading research to understand human impacts on the marine environment and the consequences of different management strategies. He has focussed on sustainable fisheries and aquaculture issues, and has held a number of influential positions, including chair of Defra's Marine Fisheries Stakeholder Forum.

### **Professor Callum Roberts - University of York**

Professor Roberts is well recognised as one of the key scientific contributors to the film *The End of the Line*. He has extensive experience in the science and establishment of MPAs and networks around the world. He is author of *The Unnatural History of the Sea*, an account of the effects of 1000 years of fishing and hunting on marine life. He currently lectures at the University of York.

### **Dr. Beth Scott - University of Aberdeen**

Dr. Scott's academic career as a marine ecologist includes several years working onboard fishing vessels in Alaskan waters. Her research focuses on functional linkages between bio-physical oceanographic processes, flexible life history traits and population dynamics of fish and seabird species. Her work is helping to identify critical marine habitats where predators and prey species interact.

### **Professor Graham Underwood - University of Essex**

Professor Underwood has research experience across a range of disciplines within the marine area, and he specialises in estuarine and coastal systems, especially the ecology and functioning of mudflats, sandflats and salt marshes. He is also a regular contributor to BBC Radio 4's environment programme *Home Planet*.

## **The work of the Panel**

The remit of the Panel is primarily to provide advice to the four regional projects on the scientific basis of their proposals for networks of MCZs. They ensure that the projects are following the Ecological Network Guidance produced by Natural England/JNCC for this purpose, and have provided additional advice on where shortfalls are occurring within the projects and how these can best be addressed by them. The Panel are scheduled to meet at key stages throughout the MCZ selection process (see below for more detail) but are on hand at all times to provide additional advice and support to the projects, delivery partners and Defra whenever requested to do so. The Panel work openly and transparently, and their meeting papers are available online at the Defra website, or by contacting the Secretariat to the Panel. The Chair has also encouraged the wider distribution of the feedback on project iterations and these are available to anyone with an interest. He has committed to attending meetings of the regional projects' stakeholder groups to explain the work of the Panel, and is happy to answer questions from anyone with an interest in finding out more about their work, at any time.

Although the MCZ selection process is unique in that unlike other MPAs, socio- economic factors are taken into account, it is **not** within the remit of the Panel to comment on those factors - Defra economists are providing additional guidance and working with the regional projects separately on the economic Impact Assessments that will accompany the draft site proposals. Neither are the Panel concerned about how the regional projects are made up, how they are operating, and what stakeholders are involved in the process - they are focussed primarily on ensuring that best available science has been gathered by the project teams for the stakeholders to make decisions on MCZ site proposals

The Terms of Reference for the Panel can be found [here](#).

## **Timetable of meetings**

The SAP meet at key points throughout the MCZ iteration process, predominantly around each reporting stage (July 2010, October 2010, February 2011 and June 2011) in London. Around a week after the reports have been produced by the regional projects, the project teams will present them to the SAP, answering questions and explaining how they reached their conclusions. The SAP will then meet again a week later as a Panel of experts to discuss and reach a consensus opinion on the extent to which the ENG criteria have been met. Their formal collective response will be developed over the following two weeks or so under the guidance of the Chair who will prepare a report on their findings for Defra, the Regional Projects and Natural England/JNCC.

(The Chairman's report is also passed for comment to the UK Marine Biodiversity Policy Steering Group, a group chaired by Defra and made up of representatives of other Government Departments, delivery partners, and the Devolved Administrations, with an interest in marine issues).

Since they were appointed, the Chair and Panel have also met with the regional projects, as and when necessary, and continue to be at hand throughout the process to offer additional guidance and support, as a collective group of marine experts.

The Panel members are in regular contact with Defra, Natural England/JNCC and the projects via E-mail and regularly share information and advice in between meetings.

## **Attendance at meetings**

There are no standing meetings of the SAP. All are set up to achieve specific objectives and attendance is by invitation of the Chair so as to meet them. Observers are permitted at the discretion of the Chair. The only meetings which are restricted to the SAP are those at which consensus views are developed on the response to regional project proposals, primarily to facilitate an open scientific debate. Space is always likely to be a constraint on other occasions.

## **Reporting**

The Chairman reports to Defra senior staff quarterly – his written reports are shared with Natural England and JNCC. Defra provides the Secretariat to the Panel, with more regular contact between the Chair and the Secretariat, often on a daily basis. The Secretariat attends every meeting.

## **More information**

If you would like to know more about the Panel, see all meeting papers, or raise any concerns about the science behind the MCZ selection process, then please contact the Secretariat:

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