

# Living Seas MCZ campaign

Give us your wave of support

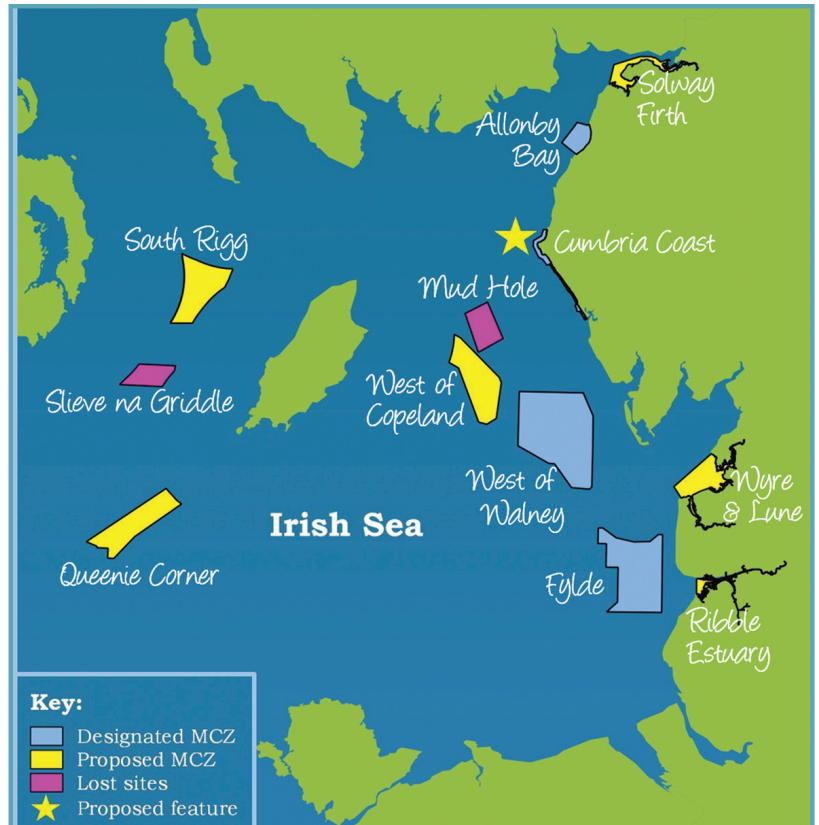
## Help us protect the Irish Sea

We've been calling for the government to designate a connected network of marine protected areas throughout our seas – we need your help to make sure this happens.

We need to safeguard our seas and marine life for future generations to enjoy. So far, 50 Marine Conservation Zones (MCZs) have been designated nationally, including four special areas in the Irish Sea. This is not enough.

The government has recently launched a public consultation on 41 proposed MCZs throughout our seas, including six in the Irish Sea. We need you to show your support for the designation and management of these sites, and to ask the government to commit to completing the network.

Your support during the previous MCZ consultations has made a real difference – you have helped to secure additional features and shown the government that people care about the health of our seas. You can help make a difference again now. Please add your voice by signing a letter of support today!



### South Rigg proposed MCZ

**Area:** 143km<sup>2</sup> **Depth range:** 50–150m

**Species:** 243 species recorded on the seabed

**Habitats:** Mud, sand, gravels and rocky outcrops

**Conservation status:** Recover – this site has been damaged by trawling

This site is special as it includes a variety of habitats that support different communities of marine life. Rocky habitats provide a hard

surface for sponges, cup corals, anemones and sea fans to attach to, while fine muds are home to a vast array of burrowing animals from mud shrimps to worms, brittlestars, starfish, molluscs and Dublin Bay prawns. This area is also home to a rare breeding population of ocean quahogs and we are disappointed that the government aren't proposing protection for these rare creatures.



### Queenie Corner proposed MCZ

**Area:** 146km<sup>2</sup> **Depth range:** 55–100m

**Habitats:** Mud

**Conservation status:** Recover – this site has been damaged by trawling

The muddy seabed in this site is

home to mud shrimps, Dublin Bay prawns, common tower shells, slender sea pens and a sea urchin called the spiny mudlark! This site has been proposed by and has the support of fisherman.



## Ribble Estuary, Wyre & Lune, and Solway Firth proposed MCZs

**Area:** 15, 92 and 45km<sup>2</sup> respectively

**Species:** Fish including European smelt, wading birds, cockles, mussels, living reefs

**Habitats:** Boulder and cobble reefs in the outer estuary, intertidal mudflats and saltmarsh creeks

**Conservation status:** Recover – smelt populations have declined drastically over the past 200 years

European smelt were once widespread in estuaries across the UK but they have been lost from many estuaries in England and Scotland. They feed over rocky areas in the lower estuary and migrate to freshwater to spawn. Juvenile smelt gather together in nursery grounds in the middle estuary before heading back towards the sea.



## West of Copeland proposed MCZ

**Area:** 158km<sup>2</sup> **Depth range:** 5–50m

**Habitats:** Mixed sediments from fine sand to coarse gravels

**Conservation status:** Recover – the seabed here is sensitive to damage from trawling and dredging

The range of sandy sediments

on the seabed supports a wealth of wildlife from molluscs to sea urchins, and burrowing anemones and starfish. Not much of the seabed in the Irish Sea is made of coarse sand and gravel so it is vital that we protect special areas of this scarce habitat.



## Cumbria Coast MCZ - new proposed feature

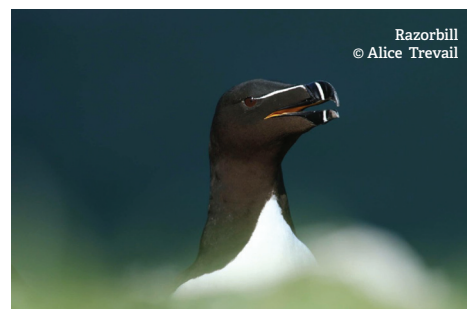
**Area:** 18km<sup>2</sup>

**Species:** The cliffs at St Bees are home to the only breeding colony of seabirds in the North West

**Conservation status:** Recover – razorbill populations here have been fluctuating over the past few decades

Various intertidal habitats are already protected within this site and razorbills are now proposed as a new feature here.

Razorbills nest on the cliffs at St Bees Head and inclusion in the MCZ would protect these seabirds during the breeding season.



## Lost sites: Mud Hole and Slieve na Griddle proposed MCZs

**Area:** 73 and 58km<sup>2</sup> respectively

**Depth range:** 25–50m and 70–150m

**Habitats:** Mud

**Conservation status:** Recover – these sites have been damaged by trawling

These sites would protect important deep muddy habitats in the Irish Sea. However, they have been lost from the process at this stage. The network of protected areas will only be completed if these sites are also designated.



## Returning your response

**Your voice really counts. Please sign and return your letter using the Freepost envelope today. You can also include additional comments or write your own letter if you would like to add a personal touch.**

**Return address:** MCZ Consultation Response, Cumbria Wildlife Trust, Freepost Plus RTLT-ZKBR-ZCBB, Plumgarths, Crook Road, Kendal, Cumbria LA8 8LX.

You can also respond online at: [www.livingseasnw.org.uk/waveofsupport](http://www.livingseasnw.org.uk/waveofsupport)

**Please return your letter by Friday 13 July 2018.** To find out more about our work, MCZs or how to get involved please contact Dr Emily Baxter, Senior Marine Conservation Officer on 01539 816300, email [livingseasnw@cumbriawildlifetrust.org.uk](mailto:livingseasnw@cumbriawildlifetrust.org.uk) or visit [www.livingseasnw.org.uk](http://www.livingseasnw.org.uk). If you'd prefer to receive these updates by email, or if you no longer wish to receive them, please contact me to let me know.