



Consultation on marine Special Areas of Conservation (SACs)

Lune Deep pSAC and Prawle Point to Start Point pSAC

August 2010

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Purpose of this document

This document provides guidance to stakeholders for the formal consultation in 2010 on two possible Special Areas of Conservation (pSACs¹); Lune Deep pSAC, and Prawle Point to Start Point pSAC. It provides an overview of the aim of the consultation, a summary of the two sites under consideration, a review of the supporting documentation and guidance on how to respond.

Lune Deep possible SAC (pSAC) is in the UK's Irish Regional Sea by Morecambe Bay (off the northwest coast of England) within 12 nautical miles (nm) of the shore. This site has previously been consulted on, from November 2009 to February 2010, but as a result of new evidence coming to light, the boundary has been significantly revised.

Prawle Point to Start Point possible SAC lies in the Western English Channel (in the UK's Western English Channel Regional Sea), off the coast of Devon within 12 nautical miles (nm) of the shore. This site has not previously been consulted on, but it lies adjacent to Prawle Point to Plymouth Sound candidate SAC (cSAC)² which formed part of the consultation carried out from November 2009 to February 2010.

Aim of the consultation

The aim of this formal consultation is to seek the view of all interested parties on:

- The scientific case for the designation of the two pSACs; and
- The assessment of the likely economic, environmental and social impacts of the designation of each site.

This consultation runs for 12 weeks from **Friday 20th August 2010 to Friday 12th November 2010** and is being undertaken under the code of practice outlined in 'Annex B: Consultation code of practice'.

How to contribute and deadline for responses

We welcome your comments on the site recommendations and the associated impact assessment. We recommend that you:

1. Use this document to find out which site is of interest to you.
2. Read the *SAC Selection Assessment Document and addendums* and associated *Impact Assessment* documents for each site. Background information on the purpose of these documents is set out at page 7. They can be accessed from the Natural England website <http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/marine/sacconsultation/default.aspx> . Also read the 'Frequently Asked Questions' on this website.
3. Submit your response, basing it on the questions set out in Annex A (page 12). If you can, please use the template available on the above website to submit your feedback. If you have trouble downloading it, we can send either an electronic or printed copy to you.

¹ The term possible SAC, or pSAC, means that the site has been approved for formal consultation but has not yet been submitted to the European Union.

² The term candidate SAC, or cSAC, means that the site has been submitted to the European Commission for approval for designation.

The closing date for responses to this consultation is **Friday 12th November 2010**. If you do not have access to the Internet, please contact us (details on page 5) and we will supply electronic or printed copies of the material that you require.

Confidentiality

At the end of the consultation period, copies of the consultation responses and/or the information contained in such responses - including personal information - may be made publicly available. The information they contain may also be published on our website in a summary of responses.

A report on the consultation will also be produced for the Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, which he will consider before deciding whether to propose any of these possible SAC sites to the European Commission.

Information supplied in consultation responses may also be used to revise the impact assessment (quoting the source) before final versions are submitted to the Secretary of State.

If you do not consent to these disclosures, you must clearly request that your response be treated as confidential. Any confidentiality disclaimer generated by your IT system in email responses will not be treated as such a request. We will respect personal privacy, whilst complying with access to information requests to the extent necessary to enable Conservation Agencies to comply with their statutory obligations under the Environmental Information Regulations 2004, and the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Further guidance on access to information can be found at:

http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/Images/NEAccessToInformationStatement_tcm6-4934.pdf

How to respond

All comments that are submitted in writing will be considered.

Please send Lune Deep pSAC comments to Natural England's Manchester office and Prawle Point to start Point pSAC comments to Natural England's Exeter office.

If your comments relate to both sites, you may send them to just one address.

Responses on Lune Deep pSAC

Email to nwmarine@naturalengland.org.uk

Telephone – 0300 060 2777

Postal address – Natural England North West Regional Office,
3rd Floor, Bridgewater House
60 Whitworth Street
Manchester, M1 6LT

Responses on Prawle Point to Start Point pSAC

Email to swmarine@naturalengland.org.uk

Telephone – 0300 060 0229

Postal address – Natural England South West Regional Office,
Renslade House
Bonhay Road
Exeter, EX4 3AW

Why have Lune Deep pSAC and Prawle Point to Start Point pSAC been proposed?

Both Lune Deep pSAC and Prawle Point to Start Point pSAC have been identified by Natural England as two of the best examples of the range and diversity of reef in the UK for protection under the Habitats Directive (based on the habitats' biological quality, geographical location, and the proportion of the UK resource of the habitats the site contains).

Reefs

Reefs are rocky marine habitats or biological concretions that arise from the seabed. They can be divided into those where animal and plant communities develop on rock or stable boulders and cobbles, and those where the structure is created by the animals themselves (biogenic reefs). Rocky reefs are extremely variable: their structure and associated communities are determined by underlying geology, depth, salinity levels, exposure to wave and tides, as well as distance from the coast. Rocky reefs provide a hard surface for attachment by sessile organisms such as sponges, anemones, corals, hydroids, bryozoans, worms, sea-squirts and molluscs as well as diverse mobile species of crustaceans and fish.

Lune Deep was a component of the Shell Flat and Lune Deep pSAC that was consulted on from November 2009 to February 2010. Shell Flat was recommended for designation for its sandbank habitat, and Lune Deep for its reef habitat. During the consultation, scientific evidence came to light suggesting that the boundary for the Lune Deep part of the site should be changed. As the recommended boundary change is significant for this site, Natural England is making the site recommendation for Lune Deep available for further consultation, whilst Shell Flat has been submitted as a candidate SAC to the European Commission.

Evidence for an SAC between **Prawle Point and Start Point** also came to light during the consultation from November 2009 to February 2010. It lies adjacent to the Prawle Point to Plymouth Sound and Eddystone pSAC and which was recommended for designation for its reef habitat. Prawle Point to Plymouth Sound and Eddystone pSAC was subject to consultation in 2009-10 and has now been submitted as a candidate SAC to the European Commission.

Documents for consultation

For each site there are two types of document providing detailed information, a SAC Selection assessment document and an impact assessment. We welcome your comments on both these documents.

SAC Selection Assessment documents and addendums

SAC Selection Assessment documents (SADs) provide the detailed scientific evidence for each site and evaluate its interest features according to the Habitats Directive selection criteria and guiding principles. Each document contains:

- i. a map of the site;
- ii. its name, location and extent; and
- iii. an assessment against the criteria specified in Annex III (Stage 1) to the Habitats Directive.

For Lune Deep pSAC, read the 'Selection assessment document for reconsultation' which is available on the website. Following the consultation, we plan to produce a single document for Shell Flat (which is sandbank) and Lune Deep (which is reef) as they will become one site.

For Prawle Point to Start Point pSAC, please read the document 'Prawle Point to Start Point; addendum for consultation' in conjunction with the final SAD for Prawle Point to Plymouth Sound and Eddystone cSAC. **The information in the Prawle Point to Plymouth Sound and Eddystone cSAC SAD also applies to Prawle Point to Start Point pSAC** as the whole site is designated for reef features; you should read it in that context.

Impact assessments

An impact assessment is required to accompany all proposals for Government interventions that might lead to costs or savings for the private sector. The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) has asked Natural England to prepare the impact assessments for the proposed Natura 2000 marine sites. The impact assessments that are being consulted on now will be revised to take account of consultation responses, and the final versions will be submitted to Government along with our site designation recommendations. The information will help Government to consider the effects of designating the sites, and whether measures should be put in place to offset negative social and economic impacts whilst conserving natural habitats and species.

For each site, the impact assessment identifies the likely positive and negative impacts on the UK economy, society and the environment of the proposed designation. Each one examines the potential benefits and costs of designating the site in question. These are assessed relative to the baseline of the activities (for business or leisure) that currently take place at the site and are likely to take place in the future.

The preparation and publication of the impact assessment is intended to ensure those with an interest in the site can question and understand:

- the purpose of the proposed designation;

- how and to what extent the proposed designation may impact on them;
- the estimated potential costs and benefits of the proposed designation.

It also provides an opportunity for those who are affected to identify any potential unintended consequences.

It should be noted that under the EC Habitats and Birds Directives, social or economic considerations cannot influence the selection of sites or demarcation of their boundaries. The UK as a Member State must identify the sites and boundaries based only on the presence of qualifying habitats and species specified in the Directives. This means that the impact assessments should not influence site selection or the boundaries. Impact assessments have been produced to meet with government guidance.

In order to estimate possible impacts of the site, the impact assessment uses a range of hypothetical management measures. Management that is developed for the site may differ significantly from these measures. However, the information in the impact assessments may be used to inform the design of any measures that may be needed to manage activities to ensure the features for which the sites have been designated are conserved.

Conservation objectives and advice on operations

Natural England is only required to provide Conservation objectives and advice on operations once a proposed SAC has been submitted by Government to the European Commission for designation. However, Natural England drafted Conservation Objectives and Advice on Operations for each of the sites subject to consultation in 2009/10 to underpin the analysis in the impact assessments. These documents are not subject to formal consultation but will be finalised after the sites have been submitted to the EC.

You may wish to refer to the Conservation Objectives and Advice on Operations documents for Shell Flat and Lune Deep pSAC (which underpins the impact assessment on the new boundary Lune Deep) and for Prawle Point to Plymouth Sound and Eddystone pSAC (which underpins the impact assessment for Prawle Point to Start Point pSAC) in considering your response to the consultation.

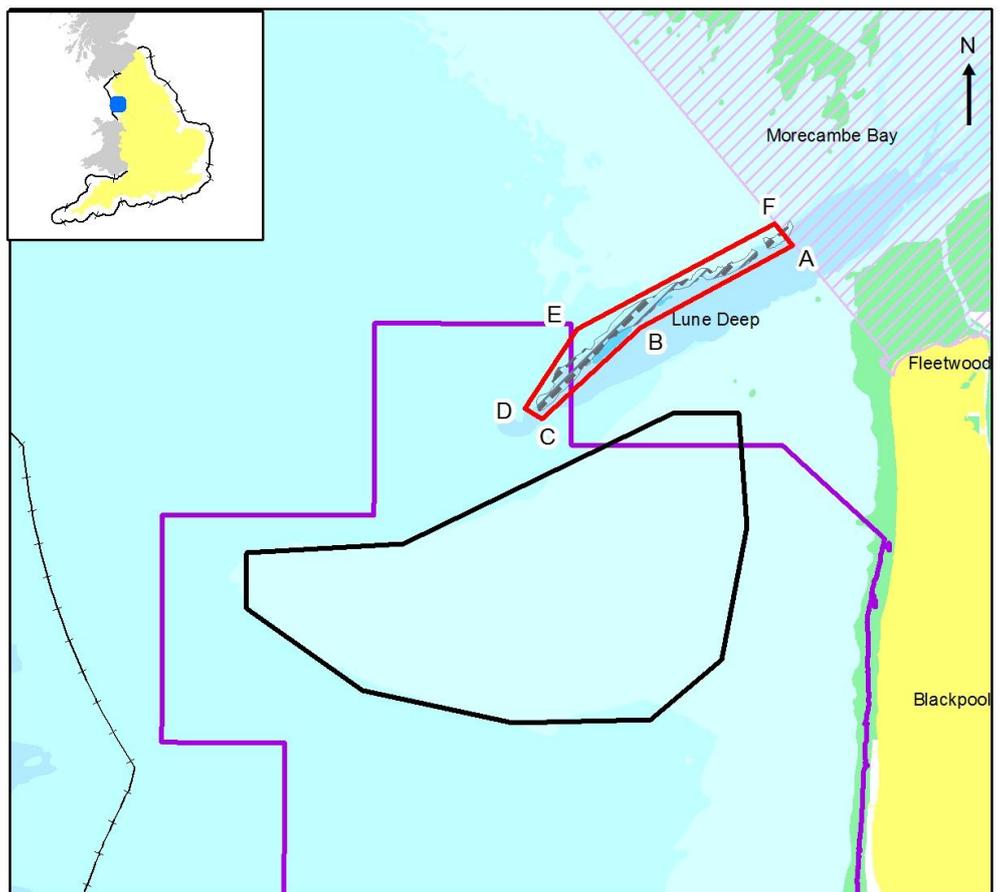
Summary site information

Lune Deep pSAC

Site centre location 53° 56' 2" N, 3° 9' 58" W (Datum: WGS84)

Site surface area 921.51 ha (UTM Zone 30 Northern hemisphere WGS84)

16% of this site overlaps with Liverpool Bay SPA.



possible Special Area of Conservation

Lune Deep

- Lune Deep pSAC
- Shell Flat cSAC
- Morecambe Bay SAC
- Liverpool Bay SPA
- Reefs

Depth Areas

- Drying
- <=10m
- <=20m
- <=50m
- <=100m
- Land
- England 12nM Territorial Seas Limit

EU Site Code: UK0
 Version number: 2.0
 Longitude: 3° 9' 58" W
 Latitude: 53° 56' 2" N
 Projection: UTM 30N (WGS84)
 Area of SAC: 9.17 sq km
 916.72 ha

Theme ID: 1452095
 Grid Ref:
 Version: 6.4
 Plotted: 12/08/2010
 Plot ID: 4.4

Scale 1:200,000 Map 1 of 1
 0 1.252.5 5 Kilometers

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Site overview:

The Lune Deep pSAC comprises of a rocky reef on its northern edge and Lune Deep channel to the south. The reef covers 33 percent of the site (307 ha).

Lune Deep channel is an enclosed deep hole at the entrance of Morecambe Bay. It has been produced through scouring which distinguishes the pSAC from other glacial reefs in existing SACs in the same Regional Sea (which are glacial deposits). Lune Deep pSAC supports mixed turf communities over a cobble/rock substrate, which provide habitat for hydroids, sponges and bryozoans. The reef is a contrast to the surrounding muddy habitat.

The reef in this area is part of a high energy site due to the strong tidal currents running into and out of Morecambe Bay. Despite a large sediment influence in the area, the site supports a healthy reef community across a variety of depths. Outer Morecambe Bay is an important spawning ground for sprat and a spawning and nursery ground for sole, whiting, plaice and herring.

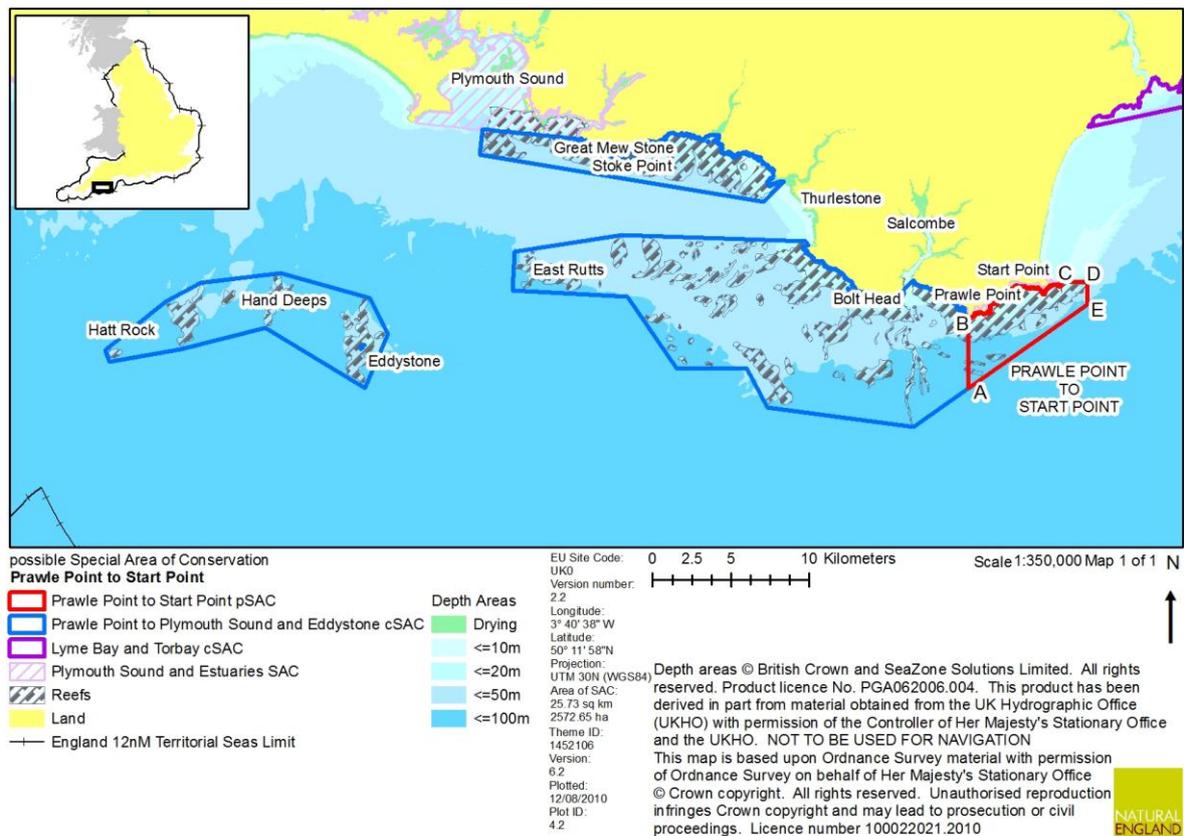
The impact assessment identifies that at the current (2010) level of activity there is a medium risk that impacts on the interest features in the site will increase from export cables for a consented but not yet constructed wind farm and a low risk from oil/gas exploration and production (increased activity would increase the risk). Additional information is needed to assess the impact of commercial and recreational fisheries on the reef and its typical species. At the current level of activity, there is a low risk that wind farm turbines, recreation (other than fisheries), and activities that result in land-based sources of pollution will have impacts on the interest features in the site if they increase in intensity the next ten years.

Prawle Point to Start Point pSAC

Site centre location

Degrees and minutes 50° 11' 58" N 3° 40' 38" W (Datum: WGS84)

Site surface area 2574.50 ha (UTM Zone 30 Northern hemisphere WGS84)



The reefs between Prawle Point and Start Point are very diverse and support many species, some of which are nationally uncommon and protected, including for example, the pink sea fan and stony coral (Figure 1.2, which can be found along with the other figures at the end of the main body of the Evidence Base, just before the references).

The site contains 50% reef feature. The reefs around Lannacombe Bay and Start point consist of slate bedrock and steep cliff faces. It has higher numbers of erect branching bryozoans and hydroids than found at the reefs between Salcombe and Plymouth, adjacent to the site.

In the areas of the site close to the shore, brittlestars and the common mussel are frequently found and there are a number of key species typically associated with defined reef habitat that have been recorded, including for example algae, soft coral, bryozoans and hydroids.

The impact assessment identifies a medium risk that impacts on interest features will increase from developments to generate electricity from tidal stream energy in the site. Additional information is needed to assess the impact of commercial and recreational fisheries on the reefs and their typical species. At their current level of activity, there is a low risk that shipping, recreation (other than fisheries), and activities that result in land-based

sources of pollution will have impacts on the interest features in the site that increase over the next ten years.

Annex A: Consultation questions

Each question should be addressed individually for **each** of the two sites (as set out on the template available on the website) at

<http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/marine/sacconsultation/default.aspx>

Scientific Case

- Q1 - Do you accept the scientific basis for the sites being put forward in this round of consultation? If not, then please could you explain why?
- Q2 - Please indicate if you have any scientific information, not already referenced in the SAC Selection Assessment document or Departmental Brief for the site?
- Q3 - Do you have any information additional to that included in the SAC Selection Assessment document or Departmental Brief about the condition of Annex I habitats within the site boundary that you would like to share with Natural England/JNCC?
- Q4 - Do you have any further comments on the scientific selection of the sites as possible SACs or potential SPAs?

Economic and Social Impacts

- Q1 – Does the impact assessment accurately reflect the likely effect of the hypothetical management of the site on human activities? If not please explain why including if possible information on:
- the scale, extent (in economic terms) and type of the activity and the amount of it that would be affected by the hypothetical (both the minimum and the maximum) measures in the site.
 - the nature and extent of the effects (positive and/or negative) on the sector operating within the site (or the effects on individuals or businesses where information on the sector cannot be provided). Where possible please describe the effects in economic terms such as value of goods (such as value of landings of fish from the site that would be affected, ideally specifying the species), costs of measures to mitigate the impacts (such as costs of surveys or additional cable length), impacts on employment (estimated number of full-time equivalent jobs) and impacts as a result of competition and gear conflicts in fishing grounds.
 - any significant effects the hypothetical measures would have on communities and the local economy, including impacts to profits and crew share.
- Q2 - How might fishers specifically, either the industry or individuals, respond to the hypothetical management measures used for analysis?
- Q3 - What is the level of recreational angling charters operating and mooring in the sites, and what species do they typically fish?

Annex B: Consultation code of practice

This consultation has been undertaken in line with the guidance provided by Government. The seven key consultation criteria are reproduced in summary form below, but should you wish to see the full guidelines they can be found at the following website:

<http://www.berr.gov.uk/whatwedo/bre/consultation-guidance/page44458.html>

Criterion 1: When to consult

Formal consultation should take place at a stage when there is scope to influence the policy outcome.

Criterion 2: Duration of consultation exercises

Consultations should normally last for at least 12 weeks with consideration given to longer timescales where feasible and sensible.

Criterion 3: Clarity of scope and impact

Consultation documents should be clear about the consultation process, what is being proposed, the scope to influence and the expected costs and benefits of the proposals.

Criterion 4: Accessibility of consultation exercises

Consultation exercises should be designed to be accessible to, and clearly targeted at, those people the exercise is intended to reach.

Criterion 5: The burden of consultation

Keeping the burden of consultation to a minimum is essential if consultations are to be effective and if consultees' buy-in is to be obtained.

Criterion 6: Responsiveness of consultation exercises

Consultation responses should be analysed carefully and clear feedback should be provided to participants following the consultation.

Criterion 7: Capacity to consult

Officials running consultations should seek guidance in how to run an effective consultation exercise and share what they have learned from the experience.