



Conservation and Reporting Team  
Marine Division  
Department of the Environment  
2nd Floor  
Klondyke Building  
Cromac Avenue  
Belfast  
BT7 2JA

19 January 2016

Dear Stakeholder,

**Invitation to respond to the consultation on proposed Special Areas of Conservation for harbour porpoise**

I am writing to invite you to respond to a consultation on proposals for Special Areas of Conservation (pSAC) for Harbour Porpoise. The consultation for the network of harbour porpoise SACs is divided into two, with the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) (on behalf of England, Northern Ireland and for the offshore waters) and Natural Resources Wales (NRW), running consultations for separate parts of the network.

The consultation package is aimed at organisations, groups, and people who undertake activities, or have a general interest in the marine area.

**Background**

A number of marine areas are under consideration as proposed SACs for harbour porpoise.

SACs are areas of land or sea identified as being of European importance for the conservation of biodiversity. Under the EU Habitats Directive, all EU Member States are required to designate SACs and put in place measures to ensure the conservation of the habitats and species for which the sites are designated.

**Equality Impact Assessment**

Under section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, public authorities have a statutory duty to promote equality of opportunity. Preliminary screening exercises have been undertaken, and it is considered that there are no significant implications for equality of opportunity as a result of these proposals. Therefore, a full Equality Impact Assessment is not required.

Copies of all screened policies are available on the Department's website:  
<https://www.doeni.gov.uk/equality-doe>

### **Consultation Arrangements**

Full details of the proposals for the site in Northern Ireland, the North Channel pSAC, along with links to all of the other sites undergoing consultation are available here

<http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/SACconsultation>

Comments are invited on any aspect of the proposals.

The information includes:

- A brief, illustrated site summary document;
- A site Assessment Document (the scientific case for designation); and
- A set of management options in relation to each relevant activity; and,
- An Impact Assessment of the network as a whole, combining environmental, social, and economic impacts.

Decisions on whether to designate SACs in UK waters are made by UK Ministers with Ministers in the devolved Administrations being responsible for their respective waters. No decisions have yet been made in relation to these sites.

In an effort to reduce the environmental impact of the production of consultation papers, the Department is opting to send notification of this consultation exercise electronically to stakeholders.

If required, a limited number of hard copies (typescript) are available and the document may also be made available in alternative formats - please contact us to discuss your requirements.

### **Responses**

The consultation will close at midnight on **19 April 2016**. You can make an online response to this consultation at:

<http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/SACconsultation>

If you are unable to make a response online, please contact us to request a copy of the response form.

By email: [porpoise@jncc.gov.uk](mailto:porpoise@jncc.gov.uk)



Department of the  
**Environment**  
[www.doeni.gov.uk](http://www.doeni.gov.uk)

**By post:**

Marine Species Advice Team  
Joint Nature Conservation Committee  
Inverdee House, Aberdeen, AB11 9QA

**Freedom of Information Act 2000 – confidentiality of consultation responses**

Following the end of the consultation, we shall publish a paper summarising the responses. Information you provide in your response to this consultation, including personal information, may be published or disclosed in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

If you want the information that you provide to be treated as confidential, please tell us why but be aware that, under the FOIA, we cannot guarantee confidentiality.

If you are replying as an individual, JNCC and the Department will process your personal data in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998, and this will mean that if you request confidentiality your personal information will not be disclosed to third parties.

Where we share your response with the other Agencies involved in this consultation they will also process all personal data in accordance with the provisions of the Data Protection Acts.

Thank you for your help and participation in this consultation and should you have any queries please contact us to discuss further.

Colin Armstrong