

**MPA CONSULTATION QUESTIONS****1. Do you support the development of an MPA network in Scotland's Seas?**Yes  No 

The Scottish Seabird Centre is an independent marine conservation and education charity that inspires people to care for wildlife and the natural environment.

The charity operates an award-winning visitor attraction in North Berwick that is recognised as an international exemplar in wildlife tourism that is socially, economically and environmentally beneficial. The Centre attracts over 250,000 visitors per annum, supports over 70 jobs (directly and indirectly) and generates over £2 Million for the Scottish economy.

The charity is currently planning to extend the existing attraction to create a National Marine Centre for Scotland that will highlight the importance of Scotland's seas and inspire both Scots and visitors to appreciate, understand and care for Scotland's outstanding marine environment and its wildlife, including seabirds.

We welcome the Scottish Government's recognition of the importance of Scotland's seas and the need to both conserve and protect them. The publication of the National Marine Atlas and the current Planning Scotland's Seas consultation exercise are very welcome initiatives.

Scotland's seabirds are of international significance and they are dependent on a healthy marine environment.

We support the comments made by Scottish Environment LINK and RSPB Scotland as part of this consultation exercise.

We therefore support the designation of 29MPAs including the Firth of Forth Banks complex and extending the MPA proposals to include other vulnerable species.

**Individual possible Nature Conservation MPAs****2. Do you have any comments on the case for designation, management options and socioeconomic assessment for the possible Nature Conservation MPA(s)?****Firth of Forth Banks**

Designation:

Yes  No 

Given the importance of the Firth of Forth Banks Complex as a key foraging area for seabirds, this area should be included as an MPA.

Management Options:

Yes  No

It is essential that seabird prey populations in this area, in particular sandeels, are protected. In addition, the North East sandeel fishery must remain closed.

Socioeconomic Assessment:

Yes  No

Sustainable local populations of seabirds and marine mammals are fundamental to the success of the important marine wildlife tourism industry in East Lothian which now generates millions of pounds annually and supports a large number of jobs both directly and indirectly. Key attractions include the Scottish Seabird Centre and wildlife boat trips (5 dedicated vessels based at North Berwick alone).

All of the above:

Yes  No

Insert comments

## **Sustainability Appraisal**

- 3. Do you have any comments on the Sustainability Appraisal of the MPA network as a whole?**

Yes  No

The significant and growing socio-economic value of Scotland's important marine wildlife tourism industry must not be omitted from this appraisal

## **Final Thoughts**

- 4. On the basis of your preferences on which pMPAs should be designated, do you view this to form a complete or ecologically coherent network, subject to the completion and recommendations of SNH's further work on the 4 remaining search locations?**

Yes  No

The Firth of Forth Banks complex should be included and the MPA proposals be extended to include other vulnerable species.

- 5. Do you have any other comments on the case for designation, management options, environmental or socioeconomic assessments of the pMPAs, or the network as a whole?**

Yes  No

**Thank You.**