

A Call to Respond.

Dear Marinet Members and Supporters,

We in Marinet hold it to be self-evident that nature reserves are a sensible thing.

They protect areas of exceptional and rare biodiversity, and they provide a reservoir and sanctuary for wildlife, in all its various plant and animal forms, where nature can multiply and then spread out naturally, and with man's assistance, to re-colonise areas and landscapes that have been damaged.

On land, this need and practice is widespread. Modern agriculture and urban development has made it essential, and the abundance of nature reserves in all their various forms is legion. We have responded and created nature reserves, large and small, all over the country and whilst their abundance could still be improved they are in many ways a success story. They preserve wildlife, and the proof of their importance is evident and clear.

At sea, this need is equally great. Intensive fishing and other commercial uses of the sea have seriously reduced fish stocks and degraded both the diversity and the resilience of our seas' ecosystems. Yet, marine nature reserves - Marine Protected Areas and Conservation Zones - have **not** been established in any way near the same abundance or with the sense of purpose as they have on land. Marine nature reserves are still the "Cinderella" of the conservation movement - a dazzling presence that is forever promised, but very meagrely supplied.

We all, including the UK Government, know the urgent necessity for these reserves in order to rebuild our severely depleted fish stocks and their degraded ecosystems - and yet **now**, when the Government has the ability to create **127** Marine Conservation Zones (based on sound scientific advice and following lengthy public consultation) it has decided to create **only 31**.

This is not good enough. We all know that it is not good enough, and the Government (in its heart of hearts) knows this too.

This failure to create **all 127** Marine Conservation Zones can be reversed. The UK government is currently consulting on this very specific issue right now, and is accepting comments from the public **until midnight on 31st March**.

Please write a short letter, or email, either personally or in the name of your FOE Local Group/organisation, directly to the Government (Department of the Environment / Defra) to tell the Minister and his civil servants **why** Marine Conservation Zones are so important, and that we need **all 127 sites** to be created without further delay.

Please use your own words. That's important. It means the Minister and his civil servants know that it you who is speaking, and not Marinet or any other conservation organisation.

To assist you, we have provide below the address for your letter/ email, and beneath are also some website references for background information.

The seas are our seas, and they are your seas. Please act to protect them because, in their inimitable way, they sustain and protect us.

How to respond:

Please send your letter to: The Marine Minister and the MCZ Team, c/o Post Room, Nobel House, 17 Smith Square, London SW1P 3JR or mcz@defra.gsi.gov.uk. Closing date: midnight, 31st March 2013.

Sincere regards,
StephenEades.
On behalf of Marinet:
www.marinet.org.uk

References:

Defra / Dept. of Environment: The Full Set of Consultation Documents

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/consult/2012/12/13/marine-conservation-zones-1212/>

The Importance of MCZs: Article by Prof. Callum Roberts <http://www.marinet.org.uk/prof-callum-roberts-explains-why-more-mczs-are-essential.html>

Marine Conservation Society: MCZ Rally before Parliament

<http://www.marinet.org.uk/hugh-fearnley-whittingstall-leads-rally-to-parliament-for-increased-number-of-mczs.html>

Hugh's Fish Fight: The Case for MCZs presented on Channel 4 TV by Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall <http://www.channel4.com/programmes/hughs-fish-fight/4od>