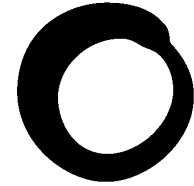




Marine Information Network
www.marinet.org.uk
www.marinereserves.org.uk



**Friends of
the Earth**

**Briefing, February 2009
Marine and Coastal Access Bill.**

Marine Reserves Amendments :

What fraction of the sea should be marine reserves ?

The Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution, 25th Report, recommended that 30% of UK seas out to 200 nautical miles should be managed as highly protected marine reserves, thus enabling the rebuilding of commercial fish stocks along with damaged marine ecosystems. This management approach, known as the ecosystem-based approach, seeks to protect the marine ecosystem as a whole in order to sustain marine biodiversity, and has been supported by the Oslo Paris Commission for the NE Atlantic and the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive 2008.

Therefore, in conservation zones, the ecosystem-based approach should have primacy over socio-economic considerations. This is not currently allowed for in the Marine Bill.

Is the 30% figure too large and impractical?

The 30% is supported by sound science recorded by the RCEP. The figure has been widely endorsed by independent marine scientists as both practical and essential. It should be noted that the figure covers *all* UK seas out to 200 nautical miles, and leaves 70% for socio-economic uses.

The UK Government's present conservation proposals within the 12 nautical mile limit will amount to 8% of UK seas being classed as marine reserves (marine conservation zones), leaving 92% of seas within 12 nm available for marine extractive industries and fisheries.

Using the 8% figure, this still leaves all of the UK offshore seas from 12 nm out to 200 nm available for management as MCZs, preferably highly protected. Thus all of this area of sea will be available for the remaining 22% of the 30% figure, as recommended by the Royal Commission.

Offshore marine extractive industries (oil, gas, renewable energy, aggregates) can easily be located and granted space within this vast area. Aggregate extraction, for example, only uses 0.1% of UK seas and most of this lies within 12 nm. Marine fisheries will also still have around three-quarters of the offshore seas available to them, and those areas which are protected will largely be centred on spawning, nursery and migration routes to enable fish stocks to be rebuilt.

The territory covered by all UK seas out to 200 nautical miles is vast, being 3 times larger than the UK's land area. It can readily incorporate 30% being set aside and managed as marine reserves without damaging the sustainability of any marine industry, inshore or offshore. The figure is practical, essential and sustainable. It can be recommended. It can be managed according to the ecosystem-based approach to marine management. The 30% figure should therefore, through amendment by Parliament, be incorporated into the present legislation.