

[Adoption of Marine Plans marks big step forward for England's seas](#)

The Government has adopted and published the North East, North West, South East and South West Marine Plans. The publication of these four marine plans follows the adoption of the [East Marine Plan](#) in 2014 and the [South Marine Plan](#) in 2018. This means all England's seas – an area of approximately 230,000 square kilometres – a third larger than the total land area of England – are covered by Marine Plans.

For the first time, England has a complete and integrated marine planning framework to manage how we use, develop, protect and enhance our marine environment. Marine Plans will guide developers, planning authorities and other decision-makers so that their activities happen in a sustainable and coordinated way.

The four latest Plans, produced by the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) on behalf of the Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, are the culmination of four years of engagement and policy development with businesses, wildlife and maritime charities, local authorities, representative organisations and individuals across communities around England's coasts.

The Marine Plan documents can be found at the following locations:

The full suite of Plans are covered in the MMO's digital system, Explore Marine Plans, which takes into account everything that exists in the local area, from wrecks and items of archaeological interest to marine wildlife, from existing uses such as cables to dredging or fishing, and applies the existing policies.

Environment Minister, Rebecca Pow said:

The completion of a comprehensive set of Marine Plans to cover all of England's waters is a significant milestone in our ambition to create healthy and biologically diverse seas and oceans, achieving one of the key commitments of the 25 Year Environment Plan.

For the first time, England has a complete and integrated marine planning framework to manage how we use, develop, protect and enhance our marine environment, ensuring sustainable development in our seas.

MMO's Chief Executive Officer Tom McCormack said:

Having Marine Plans in place to guide how we manage our seas is a massive step forward in this marine super year. Providing one

comprehensive view of existing evidence, research and policy about the coasts, estuaries and tidal waters around England's seas, Marine Plans are now the most essential tool in the box for those making the decisions about how we use – and protect – our seas for the future.

The Plans provide the vital framework for us all to work together to achieve a balance between sustainable use of our seas and protecting our precious marine environment.

MMO's Director of Licensing, Marine Planning and Global, Trudi Wakelin said:

The completion of Marine Plans for the whole of England's seas enables a paradigm shift in marine management for the future. It has involved many of our stakeholders and partner organisations and I'd like to thank them for working with us over the last few years to bring the Plans to this stage.

The work is never finished, as the Plans are updated with new research or piece of evidence and every new development that comes on stream. Over the next few months, we will be working with everyone interested to ensure that the Plans are understood and used effectively, whether the aim is to build the biggest offshore windfarm or the smallest jetty.

Working together we have the potential to make a huge difference to how our seas are protected and developed for generations to come.

Marine planning addresses the key issues for the marine area, including the coast, estuaries and tidal waters, as well as developments that impact on these areas. The plans include a vision, objectives and detailed policies on how these objectives will be achieved.

The MMO is now working with decision-makers across each marine plan area to ensure successful implementation of the newly adopted marine plans. Each marine plan has a 20-year horizon. To support ongoing improvements, the MMO must monitor and report to Parliament on the effectiveness of adopted marine plans every three years.

The [Explore Marine Plans](#) digital service provides an online, interactive resource for viewing marine planning policies, evidence, and supporting information. It allows users to consider multiple sources of information at a resolution relevant to their interest.

- There are 11 English Marine Plan areas that cover the inshore and offshore waters of the English marine area. Six documents have been prepared, combining adjacent inshore and offshore marine plans.

- Detailed maps of all the English Marine Plan areas can be found at [GOV.UK](#) and [Explore Marine Plans](#).
- The MMO has produced a short '[What is marine planning?](#)' animation to help explain marine planning available online at [GOV.UK](#).
- The North East Marine Plan covers approximately 687 kilometres of coastline and over 56,000 square kilometres of sea, the plans stretch from the Scottish Border in Northumberland to Flamborough Head in Yorkshire.
- The North West Inshore Marine Plan stretches from the Solway Firth border with Scotland to the River Dee border with Wales, taking in approximately 4,900 square kilometres of sea. The North West Offshore Marine Plan area covers a total of approximately 2,200 square kilometres of sea. The marine areas of Scotland, Wales, and the Isle of Man border the North West Marine Plan areas.
- The South East Marine Plan covers an area of approximately 1,400 kilometres of coastline and over 3,900 square kilometres of sea; the plan area stretches from Felixstowe in Suffolk to south west of Dover in Kent.
- The South West Marine Plans cover approximately 2,000 kilometres of coastline and over 84,000 square kilometres of sea, stretching from the River Severn border with Wales to the River Dart in Devon.
- The MMO has marine planning officers available to support stakeholders in each marine plan area. To contact your local marine planner please email planning@marinemanagement.org.uk.