

MMO response to Greenpeace action in South West Deeps (East)

News story

MMO and Greenpeace have a shared interest in protecting our precious marine environment.



Greenpeace is aware that the MMO is delivering accelerated plans to introduce appropriate management protection measures within England's offshore Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) following new powers contained in the Fisheries Act 2020.

In June this year, [the use of bottom towed gear was prohibited in four MPAs](#) which protects a total area of over 13,000 km². These first four MPAs were selected as a priority to preserve their vibrant and productive undersea ecosystems that provide an important food source for species such as kittiwakes, puffins and porpoises.

The MMO has since completed a call for evidence for a further 13 MPAs (from 14 May to 10 July 2022), to seek views on our draft assessment of the impacts of fishing activity on the designated features of this further set of MPAs.

With plans in place to then move onto actions to consider the remaining MPAs to follow.

As part of our ongoing engagement, MMO had already met with Greenpeace and also invited Greenpeace to a stakeholder workshop this month with other environmental non-government organisations to discuss our offshore MPA work.

As such, we are surprised and disappointed by the announcement made by Greenpeace of their intention to undertake further unlawful activity within this specific MPA at South West Deeps (East).

In a [previous action against Greenpeace](#), the court's comments expected that Greenpeace will respect and comply with the marine licensing regime in line with all other marine users and stakeholders, and it was made clear that the MMO has jurisdiction to prosecute unlicensed and unlawful activity in the UK

marine area.

The MMO remains open to engagement with Greenpeace to ensure we can achieve our joint goal of managed and protected seas. However, should unlicensed activity be undertaken, the MMO will, as England's Marine regulator, discharge our regulatory functions in line with our compliance and enforcement strategy.

Published 15 August 2022