

*These notes refer to the Marine Act (Northern Ireland) 2013
(c.10) which received Royal Assent on 17 September 2013*

Marine Act (Northern Ireland) 2013

EXPLANATORY NOTES

COMMENTARY ON SECTIONS

Part 3: Marine Protection

Section 20: Creation of network of conservation sites

This section places a duty on the Department to designate MCZs so as to contribute to the creation of a network of sites.

Subsections (1) and (2) set out the duty to designate MCZs and the objective for such designations.

Subsection (3) sets out what the network of conservation sites should achieve, listing three conditions.

Subsection (4) provides that the network of “relevant conservation sites” can include sites designated under other regimes such as European sites notified under the EC Wild Birds and Habitats Directives, Areas of Special Scientific Interest and wetland sites designated under the Ramsar Convention.

Subsection (5) requires the Department to have regard to relevant obligations under EU and international law when complying with the duty in subsection (1). Subsection (6) refers explicitly to the obligations of Article 3 of the Wild Birds Directive.

Subsection (7) requires the Department to prepare a statement setting out the principles which it will apply in designating MCZs to help create the UK network of Marine Protected Areas. It is a requirement that the statement is laid before the Assembly, and it must be reviewed and, if necessary, updated periodically.