

# Clyde Marine Region Topic Sheet Series

## Protected Areas in the Clyde Marine Region



### Seabirds



CONCERNS  
SOME/LOCAL



TREND  
DETERIORATING

### Others



CONCERNS  
SOME/LOCAL



TREND  
STATIC

## Background

The Clyde Marine Planning Partnership (CMPP) has developed this set of Topic Sheets to help communicate the findings of the Clyde Marine Region Assessment which is available on our website [www.clydemarineplan.scot](http://www.clydemarineplan.scot). The Assessment is used to inform and prioritise the development of policies for the Clyde Marine Plan. If you would like to be kept up-to-date about the development of the marine plan please visit the website and sign up to receive our e-newsletter.

## What are Protected Areas?

Over the past 30-40 years, various pieces of Scottish, UK and European legislation have been introduced to help protect locations which are recognised for their natural, ecological and/or cultural value. This can be for landscapes, plants and animals, rocks, fossils and landforms. Their protection and management help to ensure that they remain in good condition for all to enjoy, both now and for future generations. The Clyde's Marine Protected Area (MPA) network includes

Nature Conservation MPAs, Special Protection Areas (SPAs), Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), Ramsar sites, and a Historic MPA. This network makes a significant contribution to the protection of Scotland's nationally important marine wildlife, habitats, geology, undersea landforms and cultural heritage.

## A tour of some of the Marine Protected Areas in the Clyde Marine Region

The Inner Clyde estuary supports large numbers of wading birds and an important population of redshank which spend the winter here. Ailsa Craig is used for breeding and roosting by many seabirds, including gannets, kittiwakes and puffins.

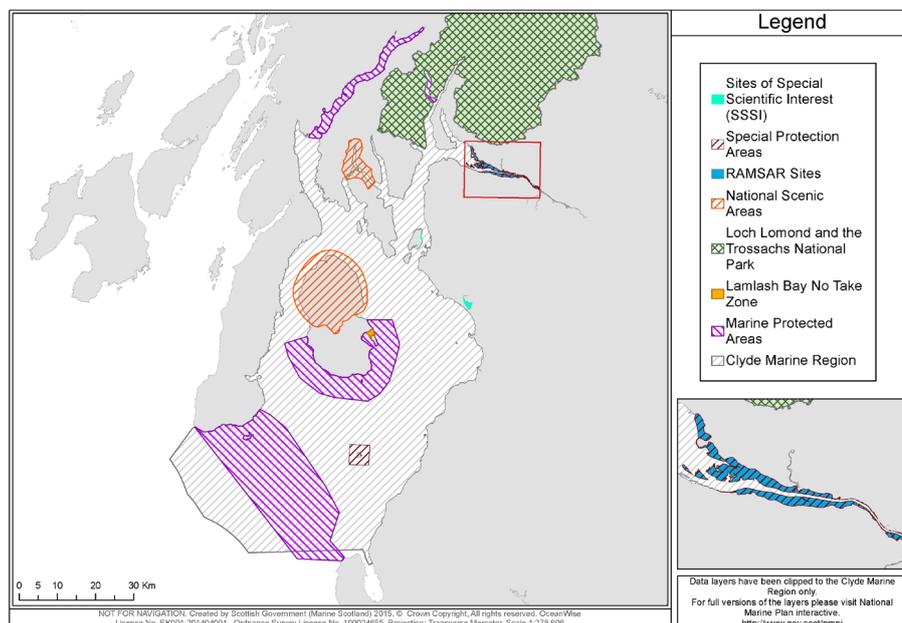
Lamlash Bay, off the Isle of Arran, was Scotland's first No Take Zone established as a result of campaigning by the Community of Arran Seabed Trust (COAST), and the subsequent working group set up with the Clyde Fishermen's Association, COAST, Marine Scotland and Scottish Natural Heritage, chaired by the Firth of Clyde Forum. It now lies within the larger South Arran Marine Protected Area.

Nature Conservation Marine Protected Areas are a more recent addition to the network. South Arran has a variety of mud, sand and gravel on the seabed supporting a wide range of species including maerl, kelp, ocean quahog, sea cucumbers and seagrass beds. Upper Loch Fyne and Loch Goil has a muddy seabed and provides a home, in particular, to flame shells, horse mussels and fireworks anemones. The seabed at Clyde Sea Sill, at the mouth of the region, is covered in a mix of sand and gravel that constantly move

around. Despite this many animals live in and on the seabed. The front created here, where the differing temperatures of the Irish Sea and Clyde Sea meet, can concentrate nutrients and plankton, creating feeding hotspots for fish which in turn attract marine predators. A colony of breeding black guillemots relies on feeding grounds around Sanda, Sheep Island and Glunimore Island.

The Iona I wreck is a Historic Marine Protected Area and is submerged under almost 30 metres of water off Gourock. The Iona I was a 19th Century Clydebuilt passenger paddle steamer which was purchased during the American civil war by the confederates as a blockade runner to gain access to Southern ports.

## Protected Areas with a marine element in the Clyde Marine Region (excluding Historic MPA)



## What condition are our Protected Areas in?

Scottish Natural Heritage monitors the condition of certain Protected Areas in line with legal requirements. Whilst most are in a favourable condition, there is particular concern over seabirds, and the following issues have been identified in the Clyde Marine Region:

Site	Issue and commentary
<b>Ailsa Craig SPA</b>	Kittiwake, Lesser black-backed gull and Herring gull form part of the SPA designation and are 'Unfavourable Declining'. Declines in the three gull species at least partly reflect national declines and may result in part from reductions in food availability.
<b>Western Gailes SSSI</b> (not indicated on map)	Long-term lack of grazing has resulted in some loss of habitat diversity in the sand dune habitats, and encroachment by non-native scrub. This has reduced the availability of habitat for sand dune insects. Strandline vegetation and insects that live on strandline vegetation and detritus have suffered losses due to unauthorised mechanical beach cleaning. Mechanical beach cleaning has now ceased.
<b>Sanda Islands SSSI</b> (not indicated on map)	Black guillemot, Puffin, Shag, Great black-backed gull and Kittiwake form part of the SSSI designation and are all showing at least a 25% population decline. It is believed that this is not due to local issues but part of a wider UK seabird decline in some species.
<b>Kames Bay, Cumbrae SSSI</b>	Sandflats have no site condition. Feature status under review.
<b>Ballochmartin Bay, Cumbrae SSSI</b>	Sandflats have no site condition. Feature status under review.
<b>Troon Golf Links and Foreshore SSSI</b> (not indicated on map)	Long-term lack of grazing of sand dunes has resulted in some loss of habitat diversity and encroachment by native and non-native scrub. Scrub management by the golf course has restored some dune grassland and further measures are under discussion.
<b>South Coast of Arran SSSI</b> (not indicated on map)	Some decline in habitat condition has been attributed to localised under-grazing and bracken encroachment. Management measures have recently been agreed in some areas to control bracken and promote grazing. The shingle vegetation has suffered minor damage from small-scale shingle extraction and vehicle use.
<b>Bogside Flats SSSI</b>	Mudflat feature under review.



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NATIVE OYSTER © DAVID DONNAN, SNH

### Why does it matter?

MPAs are recognised globally as one way to support our marine environment. A well-managed network of MPAs will protect important marine habitats and species, deliver benefits for our marine environments, support coastal communities, help sustain marine industries and provide for recreational uses.

### What is being done to help?

Scottish Natural Heritage and Marine Scotland work together to ensure that the network has appropriate management measures in place. There is legislation in place to ensure that human activities, such as building new houses or industry, do not negatively impact the condition of the MPAs. The Nature Conservation MPAs will have fisheries and other management measures in place where appropriate.



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### Where do I find out more?

For further detailed information about the MPA network and management measures in place to protect them, see:

[www.snh.gov.uk/protecting-scotlands-nature/protected-areas/national-designations/marine-protected-areas-\(mpa\)/](http://www.snh.gov.uk/protecting-scotlands-nature/protected-areas/national-designations/marine-protected-areas-(mpa)/)

[www.gov.scot/Topics/marine/marine-environment/mpanetwork/MPAMGT/protectedareasmgt](http://www.gov.scot/Topics/marine/marine-environment/mpanetwork/MPAMGT/protectedareasmgt)