



Purpose

The Royal Yachting Association (RYA) is the national body for all forms of recreational and competitive boating. This RYA position paper on marine protected areas (MPAs) is intended to enable policy makers and their advisors to take account of recreational boating concerns when developing proposals for the designation and management of any type of MPA in the UK. The position paper emphasises the importance of involving the RYA early in any consideration of future designations or management measures.

The RYA Position

The RYA supports the UK and Devolved Governments' shared vision for clean, healthy, safe, productive and biologically diverse oceans and seas. We recognise that establishing an ecologically coherent network of marine protected areas would contribute towards achieving this vision.

The RYA believes that in most cases this vision can be achieved without any adverse effect on either the public right or the safety of navigation for recreational boating.

In the RYA's view, three key issues are critical to recreational boating interests in both the designation and management of MPAs. These are:

1. The impact of MPAs on legitimate uses of the sea
2. The need for objective and robust evidence in the decision-making process
3. The proportionality, enforceability and effectiveness of proposals

1 Impact on legitimate uses of the sea

- The public right of navigation (which includes anchoring) should be respected and upheld and the safety of navigation should not be adversely impacted.
- When considering whether to designate an area as an MPA, all relevant economic and social consequences should be taken into account where the legislation provides for this. Impacts on the wider vicinity around the MPA, along with indirect effects on sectors which support recreational boating, should be included.
- All options for voluntary initiatives such as those actively promoted by The Green Blue¹ should be exhausted prior to consideration of statutory management measures.

2 The need for objective and robust evidence

- At all stages, decisions on MPA designation and management should be based on sound, objective and robust evidence. This evidence should be up-to-date and from a reliable source.
- An area or site should not be designated for a specific feature (e.g. species, habitat or historic asset) unless it has been established that the feature is present in the area to be protected.

¹ The Green Blue is a joint initiative by the RYA and British Marine. The project helps boat users, boating businesses, sailing clubs and training centres to reduce their environmental impact on coastal and inland waters.

- Management measures affecting recreational boating activity should not be introduced or retained unless it can be demonstrated that the protected feature and the activity cannot reasonably co-exist in a particular area. The implementation of any management measures should be subject to regular review and there should be no presumption that such measures should apply for the lifetime of the MPA.

3 Proportionality, enforceability and effectiveness

- MPAs should be no larger than required to protect the features which they are intended to protect, and there should be no unnecessary duplication of statutory controls already in place.
- Any proposed management measures restricting recreational boating activity should be proportionate to the impact of the activity to be restricted. Management measures to protect a particular feature should only apply to the part of the MPA in which the feature is located and there should be no presumption that such measures should apply uniformly across the whole of the MPA.
- Statutory management measures should not be imposed unless it can be demonstrated that they are enforceable and will be enforced. Such measures must be effectively communicated to those likely to be affected, using methods appropriate to the activity. Where statutory management measures are introduced, they should include a general due diligence defence.

The Royal Yachting Association – who we are

The RYA is the national body for all forms of recreational and competitive boating under sail or power. It represents dinghy and yacht racing, motor and sail cruising, RIBs and sportsboats, powerboat racing, windsurfing, inland cruising and personal watercraft. The RYA manages the British sailing team and Great Britain was the top sailing nation at each of the 2000, 2004, 2008 and 2016 Olympic Games and at the 2012 Paralympic Games.

The RYA is recognised by Government as being the primary consultative body for the activities it represents. The RYA currently has over 108,000 personal members, the majority of whom choose to go afloat for purely recreational non-competitive pleasure on coastal and inland waters. There are an estimated further 350,000 boat owners nationally who are members of over 1,400 RYA affiliated clubs and other organisations.

The RYA also sets and maintains an international standard for recreational boat training through a network of over 2,300 RYA Recognised Training Centres over 55 countries. On average, approximately 160,000 people per year complete RYA training courses. RYA training courses form the basis for the small craft training of lifeboat crews, police officers and the Royal Navy and are also adopted as a template for training in many other countries throughout the world.

Consultation

The RYA's Head Office in Hamble is the primary point of contact for matters concerning MPAs and the recreational boating sector. To ensure a uniform approach across the UK, the RYA's Head Office works closely with RYA Scotland, RYA Cymru Wales and RYA Northern Ireland, who work directly with the relevant administrations.

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