

Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru | National Assembly for Wales
Y Pwyllgor Newid Hinsawdd, Amgylchedd a Materion Gwledig | Climate Change,
Environment and Rural Affairs Committee
Ymchwiliad i reoli ardaloedd morol gwarchoddedig yng Nghymru | Inquiry into the
management of marine protected areas in Wales

MPAW 01

Ymateb gan : Unigolyn – Bill (William) Glyn Miller-Jones
Response from : Individual – Bill (William) Glyn Miller-Jones

Question 1: Has the management of Welsh seas received sufficient resource and strategic direction to enable sustainable management that supports the well-being of current and future generations?

In short, no.

The environment of our Welsh seas is still poorly understood. There has been some good work done in the past by CCW (as was) and I understand that some work has continued since.

Sustainable management requires a detailed understanding of the seas and all the living things in it and how they interact. Unless this science is known, planning for the future is at best 'guess work'.

Some species are commercially fished, but all that is known is that most stocks are in decline. We do not have a real handle on what is sustainable exploitation.

Humans have a long track record of exploitation of a natural resource until it disappears.

We simply do not have the scientific base line from which to begin to consider current and future generations.

Question 2: How should Area Statements, to be developed by Natural Resources Wales, cover Welsh seas? (For example should the sea adjoining each Welsh Local Authority be included in its Area Statement, or should the marine environment be considered separately in one or more marine Area Statements?)

Area Statements should be developed Nationally, either by Natural Resources Wales or indeed the UK Government.

Joined-up thinking is required, and I believe that would be harder to achieve if all the Local Authorities were involved.

Question 3: How well are Wales' MPAs currently being managed?

(This can include aspects such as the condition of sites, staffing to deliver management, surveillance and enforcement activities and the data on the extent of activities taking place in MPAs)

I live at Penllech near the village of Tudweiliog on the North Coast of the Lley Peninsula. The coast has long been designated a Marine SAC – Pen Llyn a'r Sarnau SAC.

The designation of the area as a SAC has afforded little if any protection to the wildlife in practical terms.

The site has been well managed / documented on paper, but I am not aware of any regular surveillance or enforcement to protect the SAC.

I and other locals are aware that large trawlers (French, Spanish, Portuguese etc.) come well inside the 6 mile limit at night as they are sometimes clearly visible to all from the shore, but they are not visible on Ship AIS when you check on the computer. Presumably they are fishing illegally?

There has been some evidence in the past of extremely destructive scallop dredging within the SAC also.

Any future plans must include effective enforcement which must include boots on the ground and ships on the sea.

Question 4: What are the key issues affecting the effective management of multi-use MPAs?

Lack of detailed scientific knowledge and understanding of the wildlife of our Welsh Seas.

Predicting the effects of climate change.

No real understanding of what the capacity of our Welsh seas have for sustainable fishing to maintain stocks into the future. Yet we continue to exploit.

Scallop dredging as a method of harvesting scallops is so destructive to all wildlife and fisheries, so very careful consideration should be given to licensing. More 'friendly' methods of harvesting should be developed.

Enforcement. Clear ways for the reporting of threats to the MPAs need to be widely known.

The MPAs need to be visibly patrolled.

Education (at all levels) about MPAs.

Question 5: Do existing Welsh MPAs currently provide the right protection for the conservation of Welsh marine biodiversity?

On paper I think that they probably do provide the right protection, but not in practice.

More scientific work needs to be undertaken – and continued indefinitely in to the future – before we know for certain that we have the right protection in place for the conservation of Welsh marine biodiversity.

The MPAs are not protected.

Question 6: What lessons can be learnt from current MPA management activity in Wales (including designation, implementation and enforcement)?

I think that the designation of current MPAs in Wales has been done in a thorough way, and well implemented on paper

The enforcement of the areas remains a matter of great concern.

Question 7: Are there MPA examples or practices elsewhere that Wales can learn from?

Question 8: The majority of Wales' MPAs are designated under the EU Habitats Directive. How should the Welsh Government's approach to MPA management take account of the UK's decision to leave the European Union?

MPAs as such should continue as such to provide protection for wildlife, but now we have an opportunity to do better.

Leaving the EU I now think that we have a wonderful opportunity to 'plough our own furrow' and develop practices that best suit our own local needs.

Give our 'in-house' experts some freedom to do some clear thinking, now they can start with a clean sheet of paper.

Question 9: If you had to make one recommendation to the Welsh Government from all the points you have made, what would that recommendation be?

To manage our coastline for future generations requires integrated planning to balance the demands put upon it.

We now have an opportunity to manage our own coast in the ways that best suit Wales.

Commercial fishing will by its nature over exploit unless limits are set.

We must regain ownership of our fishing grounds around our coast.

Any decisions about MPAs must be realistically enforced and not just a paper exercise.

Education has a very important part to play. Most people – even living at the coast – are not aware of the wonderful wildlife in the Welsh seas and coasts.

We have a moral duty to protect and learn from the diverse wildlife that we share our lives with.

Question 10: Do you have any other comments or issues you wish to raise that have not been covered by the specific questions?

I am aware that illegal immigrants have been run ashore on to some beaches in Pen Llyn, presumably in small boats from the foreign trawlers. I have reported one incident to the local police.

Protection needed.