

## P-04-415 : Support for Designation of Highly Protected Marine Conservation Zones

Petition wording:

We endorse the Welsh Government's policy to designate highly protected MCZs and urge the Government to adhere firmly to that policy. We note the pressures our seas are under, Wales' failure to meet the 2010 biodiversity targets and the robust scientific evidence of the need for much improved marine conservation measures. We acknowledge the strong global evidence for the benefits of highly protected marine protected areas and anticipate comparable benefits to accrue in Wales following designation of HP MCZs. In particular, we request that NAW strongly support Skomer MNR, Wales' only Marine Nature Reserve, which currently enjoys very limited protection, being redesignated as highly protected when it becomes an MCZ on commencement in Wales of the MCZ provisions of the Marine & Coastal Access Act.

We have nowhere in Welsh waters that has been ever been fully protected from direct human impacts. We need highly protected MCZs to: provide marine wildlife with a few places it can exist and thrive unmolested by us - we do this on land, there should not be a lower standard for the sea; enable marine ecosystems to recover from direct human impacts and increase their resilience; protect the marine ecosystem for the goods and services it gives us which we cannot exist without; help us understand the effects of human pressures on the marine environment and better understand what an unimpacted marine ecosystem is like. The purpose of highly protected MCZs is to safeguard and enhance the ecosystems within them, not simply fish and shellfish populations.

Petition raised by: Blaise Bullimore

Date petition first considered by Committee: 2 October 2012

Number of signatures: 298