



# **JNCC's Glossary of Terms for Conservation Advice**

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## Foreword

This Glossary of terms has been produced to support the publication of updated conservation advice for offshore MPAs provided by JNCC. More information on the approach to producing updated conservation advice is available on [JNCC's Conservation Advice webpage](#).

The list of terms included in this glossary is by no means exhaustive and is a work in progress. Further glossaries are available from JNCC, listed below:

[A Glossary of Marine Nature Conservation and Fisheries](#)

[LIFE Glossary of Terms](#)

[Glossary of Climate Change](#)

[Glossary of terms used in Common Standards Monitoring and Reporting](#)

<b>A</b>	
Activity	Human, social or economic actions or endeavours that may have an effect on the marine environment, for example fishing or energy production.
Attribute	Ecological characteristics of the habitat or species which together describe the desired condition or state of the feature. Attributes for conservation advice include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extent &amp; Distribution</li> <li>• Structure &amp; Function</li> <li>• Supporting Processes</li> </ul>
AOM	Anaerobic Oxidation of Methane
<b>B</b>	
Benthic	A description for animals, plants and habitats associated with the seabed.
<b>C</b>	
Characterising communities	Characterising communities are addressed within the Structure & Function attribute in conservation advice; as part of the biological structure of a feature. Characteristic communities include, but are not limited to, representative communities; for example, those covering large areas, and notable communities; for example, those that are nationally or locally rare or scarce such as those listed as OSPAR threatened or declining, or known to be particularly sensitive.
Conserve	Term used to describe the conservation objective set, where evidence indicates an attribute is unimpacted or in favourable condition. Management action is still likely to be required to keep this status. The term is applicable to NCMPOs and is equivalent to ' <i>Maintain</i> '.
Conservation benefits	These are provided in the Conservation Statements document. Conservation benefits are the benefits provided to the wider marine environment and society by protecting the habitat / species and their associated biological communities. This ensures contribution to Favourable Conservation Status, Good Environmental Status and resilience to climate change impacts.
Conservation objectives	The European Commission (2012) defines conservation objectives as 'the specification of the overall target for the species and/or habitat types for which a site is designated, in order for it to contribute to maintaining or reaching favourable conservation status / condition of the habitats and species concerned at the national, the bio-geographical or the European level'.  Conservation objectives set out the broad ecological aims of a site. These can be written at feature level providing a target for individual attributes.
<b>D</b>	

Distribution	Distribution is part of the Extent and Distribution attribute in conservation advice. Distribution refers to how a feature is spread out within the site.
<b>E</b>	
Ecosystem Services	Ecosystem services are the benefits provided by ecosystems that contribute to making human life both possible and worth living. Ecosystem services is the term used in conservation advice to describe the service provided by the habitat / species. For example; nutrition, nutrient cycling, climate regulation or bird and whale watching.
Extent	Extent is part of the Extent and Distribution attribute in conservation advice. Extent refers to the total area in the site occupied by the qualifying feature and must include consideration of its distribution.
<b>F</b>	
Favourable Conservation Status	The definition for Favourable Conservation Status is specific to the <a href="#">Habitat Directive</a> ; in summary, they require that the range and areas of the listed habitats, and the range and population of the listed species, should be at least maintained at their conservation status when the Directive came into force in 1994 or, where the 1994 status was not viable in the long term, to be restored to a position where it would be viable.
Feature	Term used to describe the Habitat / Species / Geological / Geomorphological / Large-scale feature which is designated within the site.
Function	Function is part of the Structure and Function attribute in conservation advice. Function is an ecological process such as sediment processing, secondary production, habitat modification, supply of recruits, bioengineering and biodeposition. Functions occur at various temporal and spatial scales and help maintain the provision of ecosystem services locally and to the wider marine environment.
<b>G</b>	
<b>H</b>	
Hydrodynamic regime	Hydrodynamic regime is addressed within the Supporting processes attribute of conservation advice and refers to the speed and direction of currents, seabed shear stress and wave exposure.
<b>I</b>	
Impact	The consequence of pressures (e.g. habitat degradation) where a change occurs that is different to that expected under natural conditions.
<b>J</b>	
<b>K</b>	

Key and influential species	<p>Key and influential species are addressed within the Structure and Function attribute of conservation advice; as part of the biological structure of a feature.</p> <p>Key species form a part of the habitat structure or help to define a biotope. Influential species are those that have a core role in the structure and function of the habitat. Changes to the spatial distribution of communities across the feature could indicate changes to the overall feature.</p>
<b>L</b>	
<b>M</b>	
Maintain	<p>Term used to describe the conservation objective set where evidence indicates an attribute is unimpacted or in favourable condition. Management action is still likely to be required to keep this status.</p> <p>The term is applicable to SACs, SPCAs, SCIs and MCZs and is equivalent to '<i>Conserve</i>'.</p>
Management Measures	Ways to manage activities within an MPA to maintain or improve the condition of its features.
<a href="#">MCZ</a>	Marine Conservation Zone. Term used to define designated sites within Secretary of State (English) waters.
Marine Protected Area (MPA)	A generic term to cover all marine areas that are a clearly defined geographical space, recognised, dedicated and managed, through legal or other effective means, to achieve the long-term conservation of nature with associated ecosystem services and cultural values.
<b>N</b>	
<a href="#">NCMPA</a>	Nature Conservation Marine Protected Area. Term used to define designated sites within Scottish waters
Non-native species and invasive non-native species	<p>This refers to a species, subspecies or lower taxon introduced (i.e. by human action) outside its natural past or present distribution and includes any part, gametes, seeds, eggs or propagules of such species that might survive and subsequently reproduce.</p> <p>An invasive non-native species is any non-native animal or plant that has the ability to spread, causing damage to the environment, economy, our health or the way we live.</p>
<b>O</b>	
Oil and Gas industries	This term includes oil and gas exploration & installation, production, decommissioning and associated pipelines within the offshore marine environment.
<b>P</b>	
Pressure	Pressures are mechanisms through which an activity has an effect on a feature.
<b>Q</b>	
Qualifying Feature	Feature which is designated within a site.
<b>R</b>	

Recover	Term used to describe the conservation objective set where evidence indicates an attribute is impacted and likely to be in unfavourable condition. Management actions are required to recover condition to meet the conservation objectives. The term is applicable to MCZs and NCMPAs and is equivalent to 'Restore'.
Recruitment	Used as an umbrella term which includes settlement and viability of a species to / in an area.
Renewable Industries	This term includes offshore wind farms, wave power and tidal power.
Restore	Term used to describe the conservation objective set where evidence indicates an attribute is impacted and likely to be in unfavourable condition. Management actions are required to recover condition to meet the conservation objectives. The term is applicable to SACs, SPAs, SCIs and is equivalent to 'Recover'.
<b>S</b>	
<a href="#">Candidate Special Area of Conservation. (cSACs)</a>	This term refers to sites which have been submitted to the European Commission by Government, but not yet formally adopted by the Commission. Offshore candidate SACs (cSACs) have been notified to the European Commission as Sites of Community Importance under Section 7 of the Conservation of Offshore Marine Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, in order to protect habitats and species of European importance.

<a href="#">Special Area of Conservation (SACs)</a>	Special Area of Conservation are designated under the EC Habitats Directive for habitats and species listed in Annex I and II of the Directive. Since August 2007 the UK has had the legal mechanism to designate SACs in the UK offshore marine area under the Conservation of Offshore Marine Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.
<a href="#">Site of Conservation Importance. (SCI)</a>	Sites which have been adopted by the European Commission, but not yet formally designated by governments of Member States are known as Sites of Community Importance (SCIs).
Sediment composition	Sediment composition is addressed within the Structure and Function attribute of conservation advice; as part of the physical structure of a feature. Sediment composition refers to the types of sediment present within sedimentary habitats, i.e. the amount of mud / sand / gravel within a sediment. Also known as the granulometry of the sediment, which is the measurement of the particle (grain) size within a sediment sample.
Sediment quality	Sediment quality is addressed within the Supporting processes attribute of conservation advice and refers to the pollution status such as the concentration of pollutants / contaminants within the sediments. Various contaminants are known to affect species which live in or on the surface of sediments. These include heavy metals and compounds such as polyaromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) and poly-chlorinated biphenyls (PCBs).
Sensitivity	The sensitivity of a feature (species or habitat) is a measure that is dependent on the ability of the feature to resist change and its ability to recover from change.
Significant	Term used to describe a difference which is confirmed from a statistical point of view.
Site integrity	The coherence of a site's ecological structure and function across its whole area, that enables it to sustain the habitat, the complex of habitats and/or the populations of the species for which the site is, or will be, designated. Any consideration of site integrity should work by reference to the features for which the site is designated, and the natural processes on which those features are dependent, to ensure they are able to meet their conservation objectives.
Structure	Structure is part of the Structure and Function attribute in conservation advice. Structure encompasses both the physical structure of a habitat type together with the biological structure (key influential species and characterising communities).
Supplementary Advice on Conservation Objectives	This document is part of the conservation advice package and is essential reading to assist in interpreting the conservation objectives of a site. The document provides explanatory notes including generic and site-specific information on features within the site. Conservation objectives are provided for attributes of a feature, describing the ecological characteristics and condition of a feature.

Supporting habitats	Supporting habitats is addressed within the Supporting Processes attribute of conservation advice and refer to habitats which a feature relies upon in order to function. For example; <i>Sabellaria spinulosa</i> reefs rely on the habitat they colonise (eg sublittoral sand, mud or mixed sediments in the offshore environment).
Supporting Processes	Supporting processes is an attribute of conservation advice used to describe the natural processes that support the feature. These include hydrodynamic regime, water and sediment quality and supporting habitats.
<b>T</b>	
<b>U</b>	
<b>V</b>	
<b>W</b>	
Water quality	Water quality is addressed within the Supporting Processes attribute of conservation advice. Water quality properties that influence the condition of a feature can include salinity, pH, temperature, suspended particulate matter, nutrient concentrations and dissolved oxygen.
<b>X</b>	
<b>Y</b>	
<b>Z</b>	