

Marine Protected Areas in the High Seas in the North-East Atlantic (OSPAR)

As part of the OSPAR Convention, fifteen governments and the European Union cooperate to protect the marine environment in the North-East Atlantic, including in the High Seas (beyond national jurisdiction). Based on an ecosystem approach of the marine environment, OSPAR Contracting Parties shall adopt measures for the protection of marine biodiversity which include the creation of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs).

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES, MARINE PROTECTED AREAS TO ADDRESS

OSPAR led an effort to identify the areas having the biggest ecological stakes and requiring reinforced measures of protection. These areas are characterized by an important ecological richness, usually associated with geomorphological features such as

ocean ridges or seamounts. There is a wide variety of ecosystems, including some endangered or declining species and habitats, ranging from cold-water coral reefs to large marine mammals, as well as deep water sharks and seabirds. This approach materialised through the creation of seven High Seas MPAs between 2010 and 2012.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MANAGEMENT (SEE ALSO THE BACK)

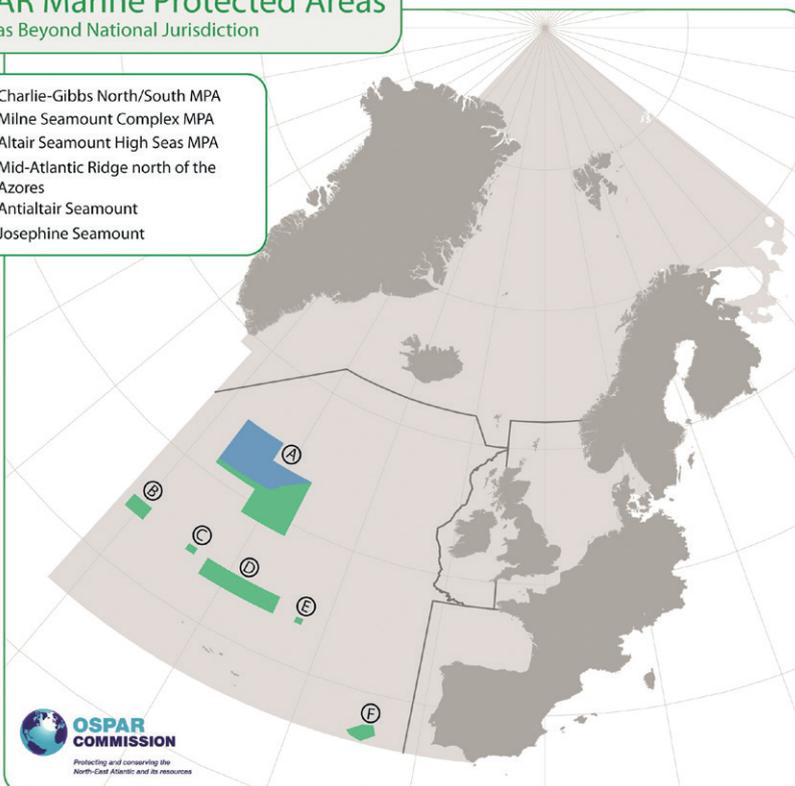
The OSPAR mandate specifically excludes the adoption of measures for fishing, shipping or the extraction of mineral resources from the soil and subsoil of the seabed, so the recommendations for the management of each MPA specify the measures taken within OSPAR. These include the implementation of measures related to awareness raising, the collection of information, compliance with good practices for scientific research in the High Seas and promoting conservation objectives with third countries and competent international organizations.

SPECIAL CASE OF THE EXTENSION OF THE CONTINENTAL SHELF

Four MPAs (C, D, E, F) are located in an area corresponding to a request for the extension of the continental shelf made by Portugal to the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf of the United Nations. They cover the water column and the seabed; the responsibility for the management of these two compartments belongs to OSPAR and Portugal, respectively. At the request of Iceland, the Charlie-Gibbs north MPA (shown in blue) on the other hand, covers the water column only.

OSPAR Marine Protected Areas - in Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction

- A Charlie-Gibbs North/South MPA
- B Milne Seamount Complex MPA
- C Altair Seamount High Seas MPA
- D Mid-Atlantic Ridge north of the Azores
- E Antialtair Seamount
- F Josephine Seamount



Click on the MPAs to access the designation's documents



- ospar.org
- mpa.ospar.org/accueil_ospar
- aires-marines.fr/partager/rerelations-internationales/haute-mer
- charlie-gibbs.org

OSPAR RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MANAGEMENT

Examples of initiatives taken by Member States of OSPAR at a national level

1. AWARENESS RAISING - Sharing information with the relevant authorities and the general public, sectoral organizations in charge of activities on the high seas

The creation of a website on the Charlie-Gibbs MPA as a tool for awareness raising and communication (charlie-gibbs.org).

The integration of MPAs in the navigation system of military ships, along with guidelines for environmental protection.

The diffusion of information on the websites of the relevant administrations (Ministry of Environment, Nature Agency, etc) and the notification of recommendations to national organizations: fishing, ship owners, offshore exploration.

2. INFORMATION BUILDING – Facilitating the collection and sharing of information on biodiversity and human activities within the MPAs.

Analysis of fishing activities in MPAs based on VMS data.

3. MARINE SCIENCE – Promoting the application of good practices in terms of scientific research in these areas and recognizing these as a priority for knowledge and monitoring of the marine environment.

The implementation of the OSPAR Code of Conduct for Marine Research (OSPAR agreement 2008-1) for the organizations involved in research activities in these areas.

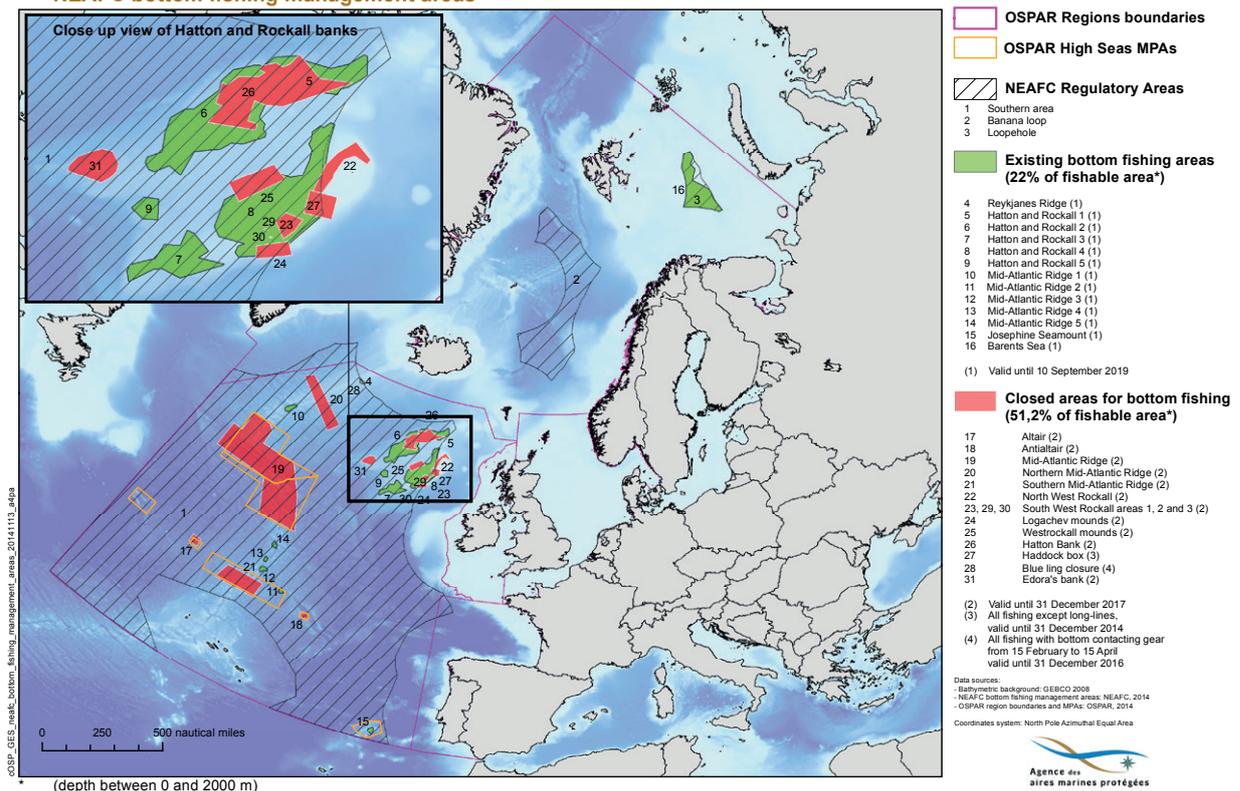
4. NEW DEVELOPMENTS – Ensuring that the implementation of new activities is in accordance with international regulations (preliminary environmental impact studies, planning of marine space).

5. THIRD PARTIES - Engaging with relevant international organisations to take into account High Seas MPAs in their respective sectors.

Transmission of the cooperation framework for OSPAR MPAs on the high seas, and other relevant areas in the North-East Atlantic to the competent authorities (IMO, ISA, etc.), for endorsement and later implementation of management measures.

NORTH-EAST ATLANTIC REGION NEAFC bottom fishing management areas

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THE NEED FOR COLLABORATIVE MANAGEMENT BETWEEN INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

Being outside the remit of the competences of OSPAR, the consideration of activities such as shipping, fishing, extraction of mineral resources, for the management of high seas MPAs requires the involvement of relevant sectoral organisations such as the International Maritime Organization (IMO), the North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC), the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) and the International Seabed Authority (ISA). The first step in this collaboration is the adoption of collective arrangements for joint management of these areas developed as part of the process of *Madeira*, which combines the relevant authorities. The second meeting was held in Paris in January 2012.

COLLABORATION WITH THE NORTH EAST ATLANTIC FISHERIES COMMISSION (NEAFC)

Areas where deep sea fishing is forbidden established by NEAFC cover OSPAR MPAs either partly or completely. Ecological issues in these areas are indeed the same for these two organizations whose areas of jurisdiction overlap and who both consult the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) as a scientific reference. NEAFC and OSPAR recently signed a collective arrangement for the management of these areas, which plans increased collaboration to improve the coherence of management measures taken by the various competent authorities.