

# MARINE PROTECTED AREAS – ASPIRATION OR REALITY?

## North Sea Marine Cluster Conference

Thursday 7 April, London

### Keynote Speakers include:

Richard Benyon MP, Minister for Natural Environment and Fisheries

Carla Montesi, European Commission

We could be on the brink of the greatest positive set of changes in the way that our seas are managed. Across the broad sweep of marine management, the planned reforms are at that delicate stage between conception and implementation. It would be easy to believe that much of the hard work is done: the long fought argument for reform is won, policies are in place, legislation has been passed and Commissioners and Ministers are firmly committed to the changes happening. But, despite all this, could the reality turn out to be very different from the intention?

Marine protected areas (MPAs) are seen as one of the most important tools for protecting the marine environment. The UK Government and the Devolved Administrations are committed to a massive expansion of MPAs over a short period of years: a process already underway. But, experience elsewhere and the hard lessons of the past suggest that disappointment could be around the corner if insufficient attention is given to the practicalities of implementation. For this reason we have commissioned two recent studies looking at the implementation of MPAs and what can be done to ensure that they are more than just “paper parks”. The studies also look at how the potential tensions between conservation and safeguarding the marine economy might be resolved. The first study is [available here](#)

We believe that there is a need to give greater consideration to how these sites should be monitored and managed if the UK is to avoid pitfalls previously experienced, here in the UK and elsewhere, and to gain from the know-how of successful practitioners. We are therefore organising a conference aimed at those with a direct interest in the proposed UK network, whether as marine users, those concerned with marine conservation or policy makers and managers (of course, none of these is necessarily exclusive of the others).

The conference is on 7th April 2011 in London, at the University of East Anglia's London study centre: <http://www.uea.ac.uk/london/about/londonlocation>

[Click here](#) for provisional programme

[Click here](#) for booking details

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