

People and the Sea

The sea is becoming an increasingly crowded space. People interact with the sea to provide the goods and services that support our current lifestyles — so how should we balance our different priorities as they compete for a shrinking resource?

Transport and Fishing

In the UK, many of the goods we buy, from phones to fridges to food, are carried by sea. International trade and travel generate carbon emissions, noise and pollution that affect marine life. Busy shipping lanes encroach on other sea users.

Similarly, there are pressures within the fishing industry, as increased pressure in time and space for access to fishing grounds can cause conflicts between mobile methods such as trawling and static gear like creels.

Energy Production

The North Sea has been a major producer of oil and gas, with its associated rigs, service vessels and pipelines. As the oil industry winds down, we must decide what to do with all of these redundant structures.

Offshore renewables look set to take their place and the sea has the potential to generate wind, tidal and wave power. Scotland aims to generate 50% of all energy from renewable sources by 2032, and offshore wind is being actively developed. This will have implications for marine life from the obvious introduction of new structures to the potential effects of the electro-magnetic radiation from sub-sea power cables.

Conservation

Scotland's existing network of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) consists of more than 217 sites for nature conservation. This network helps to protect nationally important marine wildlife, habitats, geology and undersea landforms. During the last six years, the MPA network has more than doubled in size and now covers over 22% of Scotland's seas.

Leisure

Growing awareness of the value and beauty of the seas is hugely positive but it brings its own demands. Wild swimming, coastal rowing, whale watching and cruising are all growing in popularity.

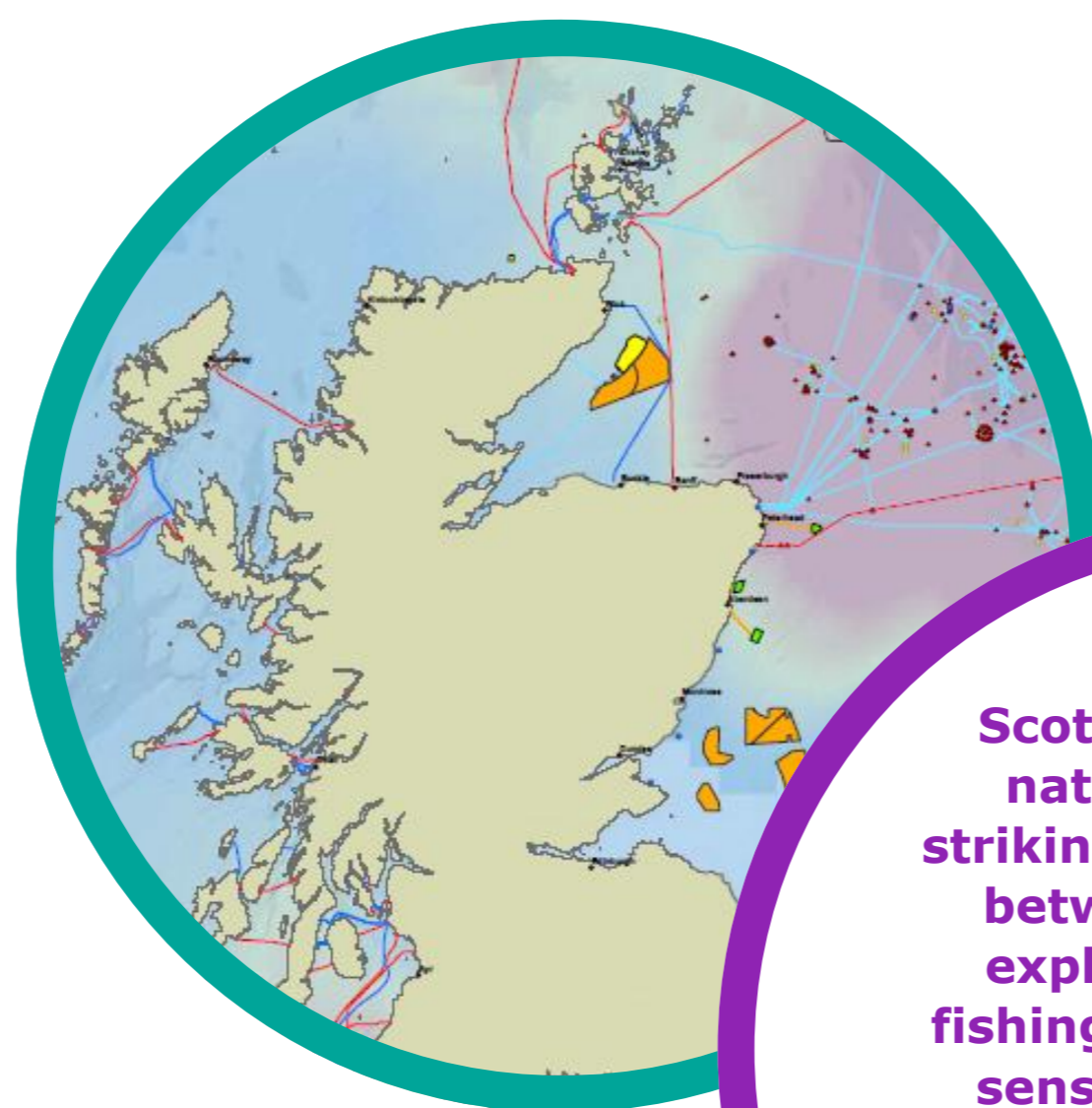
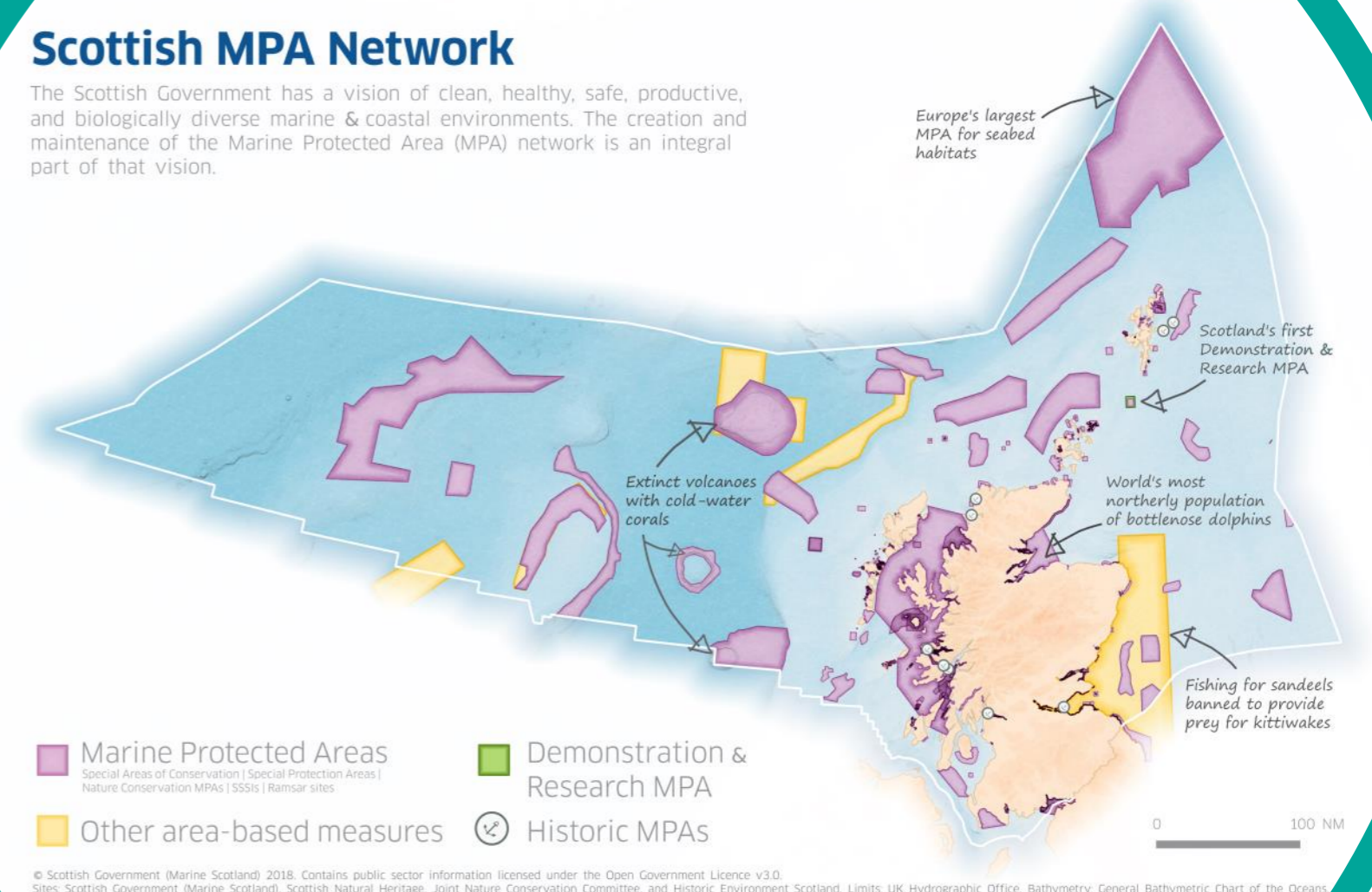
Some activities have more impact than others, but all require access to the increasingly crowded seas.

Who will decide how we use the seas in the next 50 years?



Scottish MPA Network

The Scottish Government has a vision of clean, healthy, safe, productive, and biologically diverse marine & coastal environments. The creation and maintenance of the Marine Protected Area (MPA) network is an integral part of that vision.



Scotland's seas are a national asset, and striking the right balance between sustainable exploitation through fishing and protection of sensitive species and habitats will require dialogue and cooperation.

Elspeith Macdonald
Scottish Fishermen's Federation

