



# Public Consultation on the MPA Advisory Group's Report entitled “Expanding Ireland’s Marine Protected Area Network”

Fields marked with \* are mandatory.

## Introduction

The survey below forms a vital part of the public consultation on the expert group report on marine protected areas (MPAs) published in January 2021 by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage. The report covers three main areas:

- **What** features of our marine environment should be protected
- **Why** they should be protected (including a socio-economic analysis of benefits/costs involved), and
- **How** they should be protected.

This open consultation aims to gather the views and perspectives of a wide range of people, in order to guide the Government in its work to extend Ireland’s network of MPAs. Please note that all survey responses and opinions you provide to this consultation matter to us. They will be recorded and, along with the expert group report, they will be taken into account as part of this process.

## Guide to completing the survey

In this anonymous public survey, you’ll be asked a series of questions that have to do with conserving our living seas and oceans, including: how YOU think protected areas should be defined, what YOU think they should include, and what YOU think about some of the

recommendations or implementation guidelines that have been proposed.

- Most of the survey questions are framed in a way that provides easy-to-answer options. Open text boxes are provided in many cases, in order for you to type or write in your answer in more detail.
- All boxes that are pre-filled with **Green Text** contain material taken directly from the published MPA report. We ask you to first read this material carefully and then answer the related questions immediately under the pre-filled box.
- The survey form also provides space for you to send in further comments and to tell us how you'd like to be kept informed about future progress, if so.

In order to get the best value out of your survey answers, it's essential that you make reference wherever possible to the relevant Part/section or Recommendation number in the MPA report that you wish to comment on.

If you'd prefer, the online version of this survey form can be filled in, saved and returned to at a later stage to complete it. To submit the survey to the consultation process, press the **Submit** button at the end of the survey. If you're saving your draft response, an automatic link to your survey form will be provided.

---

## Starting with you

\* A. Please select your gender

Please select one

- Female
- Male
- Other
- Prefer not to say

\* B. Please select your age group (based on age at last birthday)

Please select one answer

- 12 or under
- 13 - 18
- 19 - 24
- 25 - 34

- 35 - 44
- 45 - 54
- 55 - 64
- 65 - 74
- 75 and over
- Prefer not to say

\* C. Please select your sector or area of occupation

Please select one answer

- |  |   |                                     |  |
|--|---|-------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="radio"/> Agriculture & Forestry | <input type="radio"/> Education             | <input type="radio"/> Industry      | <input type="radio"/> Tourism & Travel             |
| <input checked="" type="radio"/> Aquaculture | <input type="radio"/> Environment & Climate | <input type="radio"/> IT            | <input type="radio"/> Transport                    |
| <input type="radio"/> Arts & Entertainment   | <input type="radio"/> Finance & Insurance   | <input type="radio"/> Public Sector | <input type="radio"/> Other (Please specify below) |
| <input type="radio"/> Business               | <input type="radio"/> Fisheries             | <input type="radio"/> Retail        | <input type="radio"/> Prefer not to say            |
| <input type="radio"/> Construction           | <input type="radio"/> Health                | <input type="radio"/> Services      |  |
| <input type="radio"/> Crime & Justice        | <input type="radio"/> Homemaker             | <input type="radio"/> Student       |  |

D. If you are responding in a professional capacity, if possible please insert your organisation's name below:

Enter answer in the box

IFA Aquaculture

\* E. Please enter your country of residence in the box below; If **Ireland** please state the county

Enter answer in the box

Clare

---

## Your opinions on marine protected areas (MPAs)

In this section, we're interested in your views and perspectives on (A) what a "marine protected area" (MPA) should be or could be, and (B) what principles you think are important in the process for identifying, designating, implementing and managing MPAs in Ireland.

1. In your opinion, what would a **good and effective MPA** look like? (Please describe key characteristics or features of such a site, in the box below)

Enter answer in the box or select no answer below

A good and effective MPA should:

- value socio-economic services for marine based activities - acknowledge and have recognition of existing activities within or adjacent to a proposed MPA
- facilitate flexibility around assigning MPA status, particularly in relation to mobile species that may move within marine habitats.
- have conservation objectives and management measures which should be appropriate, practical and decided upon in collaboration with relevant stakeholders
- facilitating consultation/collaboration is key to making MPA process a success, as such there needs to be ongoing consultation with relevant stakeholders at every stage of the process especially in relation to identifying and designating MPA status
- have appropriate monitoring and enforcement of management measures - Producers know what happens on site and are best placed to contribute to what happens daily on the ground in marine protected areas; the changes that occur seasonally; and whether management measures are effective or not - this should be taken into account as part of the managing MPAs
- On page 32, it is referenced that 'Different activities may be permitted or restricted in different MPAs, depending on their specific conservation objectives' - any such permission or restrictions should be discussed with relevant stakeholders in advance of any restrictions being imposed.

If no answer, click below

No Answer

2. The MPA report describes a wide range of approaches to area-based conservation or protection of the environment and nature, for example. By drawing on global, regional and national experience and evidence, in its Conclusions and Recommendations section (section 3.6.1) the expert group provides a definition (below) of what an MPA could be:

---

A geographically defined area of marine character or influence which is protected through legal means for the purpose of conservation of specified species, habitats or ecosystems and their associated ecosystem services and cultural values, and managed with the intention of achieving stated objectives over the long term.

---

Do you agree or disagree with the **proposed operational definition for MPAs** in Ireland that's given in the green text above?

Please select one answer

- Agree
- Somewhat agree

- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know
- No answer

3. If you don't fully agree with this definition, what elements or features you would **Change** or **Add** or **Delete** in it? (Please enter information in the box below)

Enter answer in the box or select no answer below

Proposed Definition needs better definition as to what is being protected and why, further clarity is also needed as to whether legal protection mean restriction for certain activities.

In particular, the phrase 'geographically defined area of marine character or influence' can be interpreted in many different ways and also 'geographically defined area' suggests it may not allow for flexibility required where mobile species may be concerned.

We have experienced in the Aquaculture sector the aftermath of hard and fast decisions being made in relation to designating area with little or no consultation with relevant stakeholder, imperative to overcoming these issues of the past is having an appropriate definition that is clear and understandable. If flexibility is going to be a part of MPA designation, this needs to be reflected in the definition at the outset.

If no answer, click below

- No Answer

---

## What should Ireland's MPA network include?

4. The expert group's report recommends the inclusion of existing legally-protected marine sites (for example, Reserves, Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protected Areas for birds) as part of the future network of MPAs in Ireland.

Do you agree or disagree with this recommendation?

Please select one answer

- Agree

- Somewhat agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know
- No answer

5. If you don't fully agree with this recommendation, please tell us why? (Please enter information in the box below)

Enter answer in the box or select no answer below

A significant majority of Irish Aquaculture sites already operate within or adjacent to existing Natura 2000 sites, and have complied in recent years with Appropriate Assessment and EIS/EIAR requirements. Aquaculture sector complies with obligations outlined in a number of environmental laws such as; Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC, Birds Directive 2009/147/EC, Water Framework Directive 2000/60/EC, Consolidated Environmental Impact Assessment Directive 2014/52/EU; and under the current aquaculture licensing system, the aquaculture sector is required to comply with more environmental legislation than any other sector in the marine space, thereby ensuring the healthy and sustainable use of Ireland's seas.

There is need for existing Natura 2000 sites and existing legally-protected marine sites to be reviewed & assessed as to their effectiveness in protecting the species/habitats they were established to protect as well as whether management measures have been appropriate for stakeholders. Further the inclusion of such sites (existing Natura 2000 sites and existing legally-protected marine sites) should be assessed following such a review to establish the legitimacy of their inclusion in the MPA process.

Aquaculture needs a viable marine environment in which to operate, as an industry that works with nature in order to produce high quality food produce, we are fully cognisant of our obligations in relation to conservation objectives.

If no answer, click below

- No Answer

6. Part 1 of the MPA report considers why we should have more area-based protection of the marine environment in Ireland, and where there are important gaps or opportunities for improvement.

Based on the analysis and details presented in the report, are there any **Animal species** or **Plant species** or **Habitat types** that you think must be given greater or improved protection through the legal designation of new MPAs? If so, please specify those animal/plant species and/or habitat types in the box below.

Enter answer in the box or select no answer below

There should flexibility around proposed designations and management measures, particularly in relation to mobile species. Making designations and delineations on a map is sometimes not appropriate protection in the context of marine species, and as a result has knock-on implications for other stakeholders in the area.

If no answer, click below

No Answer

7. Are there any **Other** ecosystem, oceanographic, cultural or other natural processes or features that you think should be afforded legal protection as part of the MPA network?  
(Please specify any such processes or features in the box below)

Enter answer in the box or select no answer below

Pg 81 – 1.3.3.5 refers to examples of ecosystem engineers such as 'kelps, corals, mussels and reef-forming tube worms' a case could be made that the mussel industry in particular, as well as the oyster industry, makes significant contribution to the ecosystem as well as culturally, and whether their value in terms of carbon capture and filter feeding should be warranted with protection and legal designation under the MPA process.

---

If no answer, click below

No Answer

8. As part of their consideration of various types of area-based protection in the sea and other approaches to conservation (see sections 1.1.6 and 1.1.7 of the MPA report) the authors describe an additional type of managed site that's not really designed with nature conservation in mind but that can still contribute to marine biodiversity and long-term area-based conservation.

Such sites may come under the broad category of **Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures (OECMs)**; these could include protected historical wrecks, protected spawning/nursery grounds for commercial fish or managed renewable energy sites, for example.

Based on this information and further details presented in the report, do you agree or disagree with the inclusion of OECMs as a potential part of Ireland's MPA network?

Please select one answer

- Agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know
- No answer

9. If you don't fully agree with the inclusion of OECMs in an expanded MPA network, please tell us why? (Please enter information in the box below)

Enter answer in the box or select no answer below

A designation of specified geographical area in order to meet stated objectives, in which area-based approaches to environmental management encompass a range of measures, typically have resulted in consequential effects on activities and have caused restrictions on activities such as aquaculture in a round-about way.

The Aquaculture industry were gifted designations under the Natura 2000 network and this has had long-lasting impacts on the sector over the course of the last 10-12 years with significant impacts on the efficiency of the aquaculture licensing system and the data available for decision makers to make timely decisions. It is possible that such an approach as OECM could have prevented some of the delays imposed on the aquaculture system and possibly have facilitated a more open debate between all relevant stakeholders. IFA would be open to exploring such an approach to protections only if proper consultation with the industry is facilitated - Irish Aquaculture cannot accept a situation where further restrictions will be imposed on the activities of the industry which already complies with significant environmental legislation and protocols.



If no answer, click below

- No answer

10. In examining the basis and the process for expanding Ireland's network of MPAs, in section 3.6.3 of the report the expert group makes a series of 66 recommendations, broadly covering:

- Ecological considerations
- Societal considerations
- Stakeholder engagement
- Governance and management
- Legislation
- Other considerations.

These important findings and conclusions informed a set of 14 key principles (below) that are recommended by the group in order to chart a way forward that is rational, well informed, evidence-based and balanced.

---

### **Recommended key principles stated in the report of the MPA Advisory Group (Oct 2020):**

1. MPAs should be designated and managed to form a network that is designed to be coherent, representative, connected and resilient and to meet Ireland's commitments under international instruments such as the EU's Marine Strategy Framework Directive, OSPAR Convention, UN CBD and Aichi Targets (particularly Target 11) and the UN Sustainable Development Goals (particularly Goal 14).

2. Objectives for MPAs and the MPA network in Ireland may focus on the protection and recovery of:

- Threatened or declining species or habitats
- Important or ecologically significant species or habitats
- Features representative of the range of features present in Irish waters
- Areas of high biodiversity, naturalness or sensitivity

- Areas contributing to maintenance of ecosystem functioning and ecosystem services including carbon sequestration
- Areas with significant biocultural diversity value

3. MPA site objectives may also focus on the prevention of impacts from specified pressures such as artificial light or noise or buffering against the effects of climate change.

4. Conservation is taken here to mean maintenance of or restoration to a state that is as close as possible to the expected structure and functioning of the ecosystem given the general physiography and location of the area or as compared to selected reference sites or states. In MPAs designated for biocultural diversity value, conservation of this value would be the primary objective.

5. Additional benefits of MPAs may include opportunities for research and environmental education and to create socio-economic added value, provided that these are not in conflict with the MPA site objectives.

6. A Systematic Conservation Planning (SCP) approach should be followed for planning, implementation and management of the expanded network, with a provision also for proposal of individual site-based MPAs.

7. In designing the network, consideration should be given to interactions with networks designated by other States in the same marine regions.

8. Early and sustained stakeholder engagement should be integral to the selection and management processes for MPAs. Engagement should be inclusive and equitable and the process should be designed to ensure that it is transparent, meaningful and facilitating.

9. Management measures should be established as appropriate for each MPA to achieve its stated conservation objectives and taking account of socio-economic and cultural considerations.

10. Management measures should be established as part of the designation process.

11. Management of MPAs should be based on the best available evidence and on the precautionary principle.

12. Carefully designed monitoring should be used to assess efficacy of the network and inform periodic reviews and adaptations of designations and management measures.

13. It is recommended that a national coordinating body should be established with the authority to coordinate planning and implementation, to foster good governance and ensure

close collaboration among relevant departments and agencies and synergy with related undertakings such as the National Marine Planning Framework.

14. New legislation is needed to establish the necessary framework for governance and management and appropriate resources and funding must be allocated to plan, implement, manage, monitor, and review the MPA network.

---

Do you agree or disagree with the recommended principles for the process of MPA network expansion that are given in the green text above?

Please select one answer

- Agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know
- No answer

11. What would you **Change** or **Add** or **Delete** in these recommendations to help guide possible future steps in this process? (Please enter information in the box below)

Enter answer in the box or select no answer below

IFA broadly agrees with the recommended principles for the process of MPA network expansion, however, there are number of areas of concern for our members:

- Will 'areas contributing to maintenance of ecosystem functioning and ecosystem services including carbon sequestration' include licenced aquaculture sites, particularly shellfish sites which make a significant contribution to carbon sequestration?
- Significant consideration must be given to existing socio-economic activities such as aquaculture in the designation process
- Extensive consultation, engagement and discussion with the sector and all relevant stakeholders will be required as part of the designation process and more importantly in relation to management measures. Management measures cannot be simply imposed.
- In relation to No. 1. 'Management of MPAs should be based on the best available evidence and on the precautionary principle' - Best available evidence should also include the experience and knowledge of aquaculture operators farming within/adjacent to Nature 2000 sites and have vast experience of species /habitats/birds on their sites on a daily basis. Aquaculture operators have a significant contribution to make in terms of their working knowledge of what measures (if required) are feasible or indeed practical.
- The recommendation of a coordinating body should be, as much as possible, brought in line with establishment of an enforcement agency under the National Marine Planning Framework in an effort to streamline planning and implementation in the marine space and avoid further bureaucracy.
- In reference to the recommendation of drafting new legislation, it should be noted that neither aquaculture nor fisheries are legislated for under the Marine Planning and Development Bill - all legislative requirements as regards planning currently still resides with DAFM under the Foreshore Act and Fisheries Bill as amended.

If no answer, click below

No answer

---

## How should we expand our MPA network?

In this section, we're interested in your views and perspectives on (A) potential implementation steps and priorities in the delivery of an expanded MPA network, and (B) the principles you think are important in the process of engagement with all stakeholders, including the general public.

12. Informed by the expert group report, what do you think are the most significant challenges to implementation of an expanded MPA network in Ireland? (Please enter information in the box below)

Enter answer in the box or select no answer below

(A) Implementation steps and priorities

Consultation and collaboration with all stakeholders will be key to making the MPA process a success at all implementation steps in the delivery of an expanded MPA network. In relation to Aquaculture, producers know what happens on their site and have a significant contribution to make in terms of their working knowledge of what's feasible or indeed practical. To have open and transparent discussion at all times of the implementation of the expanded MPA network will be vital for a successful delivery. In Aquaculture we have seen how 'top-down' approach to designation of the Natura 2000 network was not well managed and resulted in numerous issues throughout the implementation over the course of several years - this could have been avoided through effective consultation and discussion between, producers, the general public, state agencies and relevant Govt. Depts. Where possible the expansion of the MPA network and its priorities should be aligned with existing policies and protocols such as the National Marine Planning Framework, the Marine Strategy Framework Directive, Birds & Habitats Directives and the National Strategic Plan for Sustainable Aquaculture.

(B) Principles in the engagement process with stakeholders

Open and transparent discussion at all times of the implementation of the expanded MPA network will be vital for a successful delivery. Engagement with all relevant stakeholders should be across a variety of mediums and clear communication as to what each step in the process means for different stakeholder groups. It would be useful to have a forum for all relevant stakeholders to meet and discuss their views regularly.

If no answer, click below

No answer

13. In Part 3 of the report it's recommended that a **Systematic Conservation Planning** approach be adopted for planning, implementation and management of the expanded network, with some scope also for individual site proposals. Key phases and steps in the proposed planning approach are described in section 3.3.4 (including Figure 3.2 & Figure 3.3)

of the report.

Do you agree or disagree with the systematic, structured approach recommended by the expert group?

Please select one answer

- Agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know
- No answer

14. If you don't fully agree with the structured planning approach recommended by the expert group, what elements or features would you **Change** or **Add** or **Delete** in the proposed method to guide the process of expanding Ireland's MPA network? (Please enter information in the box below)

Enter answer in the box or select no answer below

IFA would agree that the systematic conservation planning approach could provide the flexibility to be adaptive, and the structure to be transparent and practical to apply in relation to existing activities such as Aquaculture. However, in relation to expanding the MPA network and including existing Natura 2000 sites, these existing sites should reviewed as to their effectiveness before the are further designated to support additional conservation objectives. The existing conservation objectives for Natura 2000 sites have had a profound impact on some forms of Irish Aquaculture and regular review is required as to whether such designations effective, practical or feasible.

If no answer, click below

- No answer

15. When you consider a structured approach like this, are there any elements or steps that you think should be **prioritised** over others? If so, please specify those elements and/or steps in the box below.

Enter answer in the box or select no answer below

Site selection and Review would be the two elements that could need prioritisation but not at the expense of other steps.

If no answer, click below

No answer

16. Regarding stakeholder involvement in the process, section 3.2 of the report describes the importance of recognising and understanding differences in personal or organisational interests, and in socio-economic, sectoral or cultural contexts, for example. It also examines how stakeholder and public participation in the MPA process can be fostered.

This work by the expert group, plus its engagement with a variety of representative organisations in Ireland (see Annex 1 of the report), informed the development of guidelines (below) for successful stakeholder participation in the MPA process.

---

**General guidelines for successful MPA stakeholder participation processes** stated in the report of the MPA Advisory Group (Oct 2020):

1. Identify and engage all relevant stakeholders early in the planning process.

2. Clearly define and communicate policy and scientific goals and objectives that are consistent with other legislative goals. This should also include clear communication both of what MPAs are and what they are not, generating a common understanding, as well as providing the political context.
3. Roles and responsibilities of all those involved in the planning need to be clearly defined and communicated.
4. Ensure that all involved understand the aim of the stakeholder participation process and provide clear rules, including aims and objectives, constraints, and codes of conduct (and consequences of not complying)
5. Providing science guidelines to ensure access to the best readily available scientific information, local knowledge, and spatial data by stakeholders, scientists, and decision-makers should be treated as a joint fact-finding approach.
6. Conflict among interests of stakeholders should be anticipated and acknowledged and discussions facilitated without bias (e.g. by using trained third-party facilitators), using an approach such as the Community Voice method.
7. Anticipate media attention and allocate media and communication to a dedicated spokesperson.
8. Accept that the process will take time and afford that time to the process. The process needs to engage appropriate groups early and ensure a just transition in the short and long term. Developing a model of community co-management has been proven effective to facilitate this, provided that it is properly resourced and appropriate responsibility and accountability for governance remains with the State.
9. Make use of the existing context in which an MPA is planned. This includes working with existing organised structures (e.g., CLAMS (see Box 9), Regional Inshore Fisheries Forum (RIFF), Irish Islands Marine Resources Organisation and use the National Marine Planning Framework and the mechanisms that it establishes.
10. Accept that the design of MPAs can change during the stakeholder process and keep in mind that the aim is to achieve policy goals and meet scientific and feasibility guidelines, while minimising potential socioeconomic impacts and find broad social support.
11. MPAs need to be carefully managed, monitored and evaluated. This involves detailed planning and financing.

12. Acknowledge that MPA development is not merely a “factual” process, but involves emotional, moral and value-based responses from all those involved.

13. Address potential power imbalances in the participatory process by facilitating an engagement/management model that acknowledges historical relationships and recognises inequities.

---

Do you agree or disagree with the general guidelines for successful stakeholder participation set out in the MPA report and provided in the green text above?

Please select one answer

- Agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know
- No answer

17. When you consider the general guidelines for stakeholder participation (outlined in question 16), is there anything you would **Change** or **Add** or **Delete** in them to help guide possible future steps in the MPA process? (Please enter information in the box below)

Enter information in box

IFA Aquaculture would agree with the strong emphasis in these recommendations on stakeholder engagement, early in the process and throughout the process. As mentioned throughout this submission, stakeholder engagement and clear communication throughout each step of the MPA process will be important for a successful participation process over the next number of years.

In particular, recommendation No. 5 refers to 'science guidelines' and suggests 'local knowledge' should be included in the fact-finding approach - this would be critical for aquaculture producers as they have a significant contribution to make in terms of their working knowledge of what measures (if required) are feasible or indeed practical.

Finally, recommendation No. 9 which suggests using existing such as CLAMS is a very useful suggestion but it would also be advisable to note that not every aquaculture producing area has an established CLAMS group. IFA Aquaculture would be happy to facilitate any engagement that would be required with the Irish Aquaculture sector.



If no answer, click below

No answer

---

## Further comments

18. Do you have any further comments on the process of expanding Ireland's MPA network that you'd like to add, in order to inform this consultation? (Please enter information in the box below)

As mentioned under 'Guide to completing the survey', in order to get the best value out of your survey answers, it's essential that you make reference wherever possible to the relevant Part/section or Recommendation number in the MPA report that you wish to comment on.

Enter information in box

The structure of this questionnaire does not encourage participation - IFA would have concerns regarding engaging members to participate and complete this questionnaire. The design and specificity of the questions posed can be off-putting for our members who may not be overly familiar with the MPA process. Future public consultation processes should be more inclusive.

Page 109 of the report refers to Section 2.3.4 – Aquaculture - a number of statements should be revised: 'Aquaculture can be viewed as being incompatible with MPAs due to the potential environmental impact of this sector compatibility or otherwise of aquaculture and MPAs largely depends on the nature of the MPA and its conservation objectives and the type and intensity of aquaculture involved' - the term 'incompatible' in relation to aquaculture and MPA's is not reflective of the fact that a significant majority of Irish Aquaculture sites already operate within or adjacent to existing Natura 2000 sites, and have complied in recent years with Appropriate Assessment and EIS/EIAR requirements. The aquaculture sector is required to comply with more environmental legislation than any other sector in the marine space, thereby ensuring the healthy and sustainable use of Ireland's seas. These facts do not suggest that aquaculture activities are incompatible with MPA's.

'it should be possible manage much of the aquaculture in Ireland so that it is compatible with conservation objectives in many MPAs' - As stated in above a significant majority of Irish Aquaculture sites already operate within or adjacent to existing Natura 2000 sites, and have complied with conservation objectives, showing that is is possible to manage aquaculture in MPA's.

Page 110 of the report as part of the key messages on Aquaculture, it states 'MPAs can limit aquaculture activity' and goes on to say 'aquaculture operators can in turn contribute to management of the MPAs' - IFA would argue that Irish Aquaculture are already making strides in doing this by complying with conservation objectives, contributing to carbon sequestration and providing a sustainable source of protein.

Finally on page 21 and page 25 reference is made to the effects of water quality caused by land-based activity such as 'marine aquaculture' and also that water quality issues in some 'coastal areas due to eutrophication caused by nutrient run off from land and from wastewater' - IFA wishes to state that marine aquaculture is a recipient of such poor water quality rather than a contributor. Aquaculture also contributes to the control of nitrogen/phosphorous removal as shellfish are filter feeders which aids to reduce and mitigate

eutrophication effects of Irish coastal waters.

Shellfish, as filter feeders, actually increase water quality and habitat quality in Irish coastal waters. Shellfish provide a nutrient removal service through feeding which enhances bacterial denitrification, sedimentation rates, reduces turbidity as well as contributing to nutrient sequestration.

In relation to finfish aquaculture, current WFD classification of coastal waters classifies all coastal water bodies as being of 'High' status for water quality parameters - this includes water bodies which contain salmon farms and indeed all marine aquaculture activities.

If no answer, click below

No answer

19. If you would like to be kept informed on progress with the expansion of Ireland's MPA network, please let us know how you would like to receive such information? (Please note: this question is for general and anonymous purposes only. You will not be put on any mailing /subscription list without your express consent)

Select as many as relevant

- Website
- Social media
- Public service media
- Electronic newsfeed
- Newsletter/Magazine
- Other (please specify in the box below)

Other

Pg 21 - The marine environment is also affected by land-based activity such as agriculture, forestry, marine aquaculture.

Pg 25 - Water quality is problematic in some coastal areas due to eutrophication caused by nutrient run off from land and from wastewater. The level of contaminants in edible tissues of seafood caught or harvested in the wild is regularly monitored

---

## What we will do with your responses

Thank you for taking the time to consider and respond to this public consultation.

Please note that all survey responses and opinions you provide to this consultation matter to us. They will be recorded and, along with the expert group report, they will be taken into account as part of this process.

## Contact

[marine.env@housing.gov.ie](mailto:marine.env@housing.gov.ie)