



# Orkney Marine Planning Update



Winter 2021

## Introduction

Since our last update in Summer 2021, Orkney Islands Council worked with the Orkney Marine Planning Advisory Group to draft the Vision, Aims and Objectives for the Regional Marine Plan (the Plan), supported by guiding principles. They have then helped shape the scope of the plan and identified the relevant policies, which are currently being drafted. The marine team have also participated in the local COP in the Community events and are developing a tourism and recreation survey.

## Plan Vision and Purpose

The draft Vision of the Plan is:

*“Orkney Islands’ regional marine waters are clean, healthy, safe and productive; the marine and coastal environment is rich in biodiversity and managed sustainably to support thriving and resilient local communities.”*

We will be consulting on the full draft plan in accordance with the Statement of Public Participation (see below).

Regional marine plans have a specific statutory purpose set out in the Marine (Scotland) Act 2010. In summary this is:

- Regional marine plans need to set economic, social and marine ecosystem objectives, and objectives relating to the mitigation of, and adaptation to, climate change.
- Regional marine plans state policies for and in connection with the sustainable development of the area to which the plan applies and policies on the contribution of Nature Conservation Marine Protected Areas, and other relevant nature conservation sites, to the protection and enhancement of the area.
- Public authorities must take any authorisation or enforcement decision in accordance with the appropriate regional marine plan, unless relevant considerations indicate otherwise.

- Public authorities must have regard to the appropriate regional marine plan in making any decision which relates to the exercise by them of any function capable of affecting the whole or any part of the Scottish marine area, but which is not an authorisation or enforcement decision.

The Orkney Islands Regional Marine Plan (OIRMP) will therefore provide a statutory policy framework for public authorities, including planners, decision-makers and regulators, to make decisions on sustainable development and activities in the Orkney marine environment. The policies in the OIRMP will need to support decision making within the scope of the Plan's statutory purpose set out above.

## Statement of Public Participation: coming to an island near you?

Following on from the update on the Statement of Public Participation (SPP) provided in Summer 2021, it has now been formally signed off by a Scottish Minister. It outlines how the Orkney Islands Regional Marine Plan will be prepared and identifies opportunities for stakeholders to participate and engage in the plan making process.

As part of our engagement activities, we hope to travel to as many of the islands as practicable in Spring 2022, to share our work to date and seek your valuable local input to help ensure the Plan is as informed as possible. These visits will only happen if covid restrictions allow and local communities want us to visit. If visits are not possible, we can arrange island-specific virtual Teams meetings; please get in touch if you would like us to arrange these. The SPP can be found here: [Marine Planning \(orkney.gov.uk\)](#) (click on the 'Related Downloads' tab).

## Orkney marine planning at COP in the Community



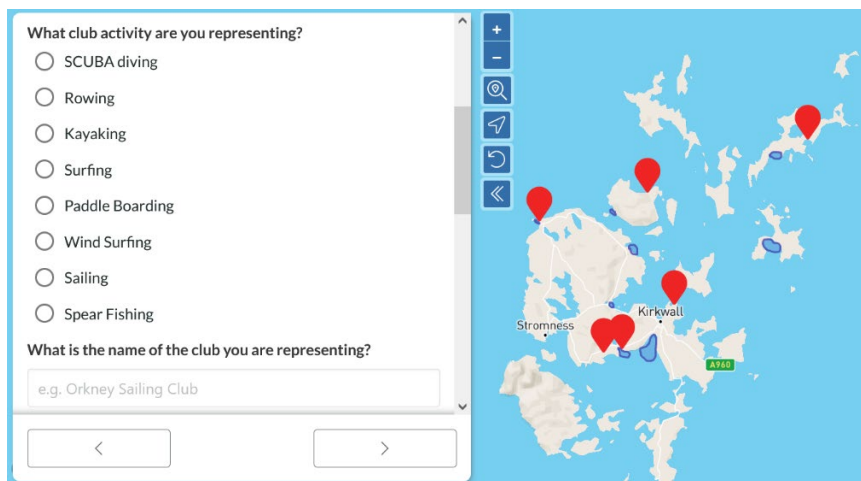
As part of Orkney's contribution to the climate change discussions, OIC's Climate Change Officer, Adele Lidderdale, arranged a series of virtual evening talks. These included a presentation on the Orkney marine plan and how it will have climate change and nature conservation at its core. Closely linked to this, we also provided a talk on the implications and likely coastal

change scenarios in relation to sea level rise over the next few decades. The videos of the presentations should be available on the OIC website early next year.

## Recreational Activities Survey

As part of our engagement activities, we will soon be launching the Marine and Coastal Recreation Survey. The purpose of the survey will be to collect information about where and when coastal and marine activities are taking place in Orkney. Using new software, respondents will be able to answer questions and then draw the areas they use on an interactive map. Users will also be able to highlight and comment on facilities they use for their activities, such as carparks, slip ways, and public toilets.

The information collected will be used to inform the Regional Marine Plan and ensure that the interests of recreational users are taken into account in decision



The screenshot shows a survey interface. On the left, there is a form with two sections. The first section is titled "What club activity are you representing?" and contains a list of radio button options: SCUBA diving, Rowing, Kayaking, Surfing, Paddle Boarding, Wind Surfing, Sailing, and Spear Fishing. The second section is titled "What is the name of the club you are representing?" and has a text input field containing "e.g. Orkney Sailing Club". Below the input field are two navigation buttons, "<" and ">". On the right, there is a map of the Orkney Islands with several red location pins. The map includes a search bar, a zoom in (+) button, a zoom out (-) button, a location pin icon, a compass icon, a refresh icon, and a back icon. Labels for "Stromness" and "Kirkwall" are visible on the map.

making on future coastal and marine development and activities in Orkney. The survey will be open to club representatives as well as the wider public, and will be advertised when launched early next year.

### Example question and map from the survey

## Natural Capital Assessment of the Orkney Marine Region Area

The Scottish Wildlife Trust (SWT) commissioned a desk-based natural capital assessment of the Orkney Islands Scottish Marine Region. It aimed to identify the type, location, condition, importance and vulnerabilities of natural capital assets and associated ecosystem services that are of value to the Orkney community and potentially wider communities.

As part of the assessment, three high level case studies provided examples of how natural capital assessments could be used to inform marine planning. The marine natural capital assets selected were chosen because of their well-known ecological, cultural and socio-economic importance to the Orkney

Scottish Wildlife Trust



Natural Capital Assessment of the Orkney Marine Region Area

community, as well as their distribution across the whole of the Orkney Islands. In addition to the scientific report, a shorter summary report will soon be published on the SWT website.

## Marine Scotland staffing update

The two new staff we advised on in our December 2020 update have moved on from Marine Scotland and our new contact for regional marine planning is Fiona Munro, RMP Senior Policy Officer. In addition, there has recently been recruitment for a number of new and vacant positions within marine planning, as well as the marine licensing and consenting teams, in Marine Scotland. These positions will support work on both regional and national marine planning.

## Contact us

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**Orkney Seagrass bed with maerl.**

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