



Delimitation of proposal for new strategic marine protected areas

The Ministry of Environment hereby requests input regarding delimitation prior to preparing an environmental assessment of the proposal for new strategic marine protected areas (MPAs) in Danish waters.

Strategic marine reserve areas

The wish is to designate strategic marine areas in order to protect a number of species and habitats which are not sufficiently represented or protected by the Natura 2000 network. Furthermore, these areas have been designated in order to geographically complement the existing network.

In selecting the areas, particular consideration has been given to certain seabed habitats that have been under-represented in the existing network of protected areas. Other biological parameters, such as upwelling zones and other pelagic habitats, have also been taken into account in the selection of the areas.

All seabed habitats (benthic broad habitat types) within the protected areas will be protected, with the aim of helping to achieve a good environmental status. Among other things, this requires protection against physical loss and interference.

The proposal

The proposed delimitation of the concrete areas is presented in the notification.

It is anticipated that new strategic MPAs will be created and that parts of existing MPAs will be upgraded to strictly protected areas.

Specifically, it is proposed that both “general strategic MPAs” and “strictly protected MPAs” be designated. The existing strategic areas in the Kattegat will become part of the “general strategic MPAs”.

The general MPAs are protected areas where other activities are permitted, provided these activities will not harm the integrity of the area according to a concrete assessment. The general MPAs shall therefore be protected in the same way as Natura 2000 areas in order to facilitate co-existence with activities which do not harm the integrity of the areas.

Strictly protected MPAs are protected areas where only a few pressures will be permitted.

Description of potential significant impacts on the environment in a transboundary context

When protecting areas, there may be a “spillover effect” to other marine areas, which may also have positive impacts in a transboundary context.

The Ministry of Environment considers that, according to the proposal for new strategic MPAs, the following countries may see potential significant impacts on the environment in a transboundary context: UK, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Germany, Belgium, France, Netherlands, Poland, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia. The countries indicated are therefore invited to offer comments via this Espoo hearing.

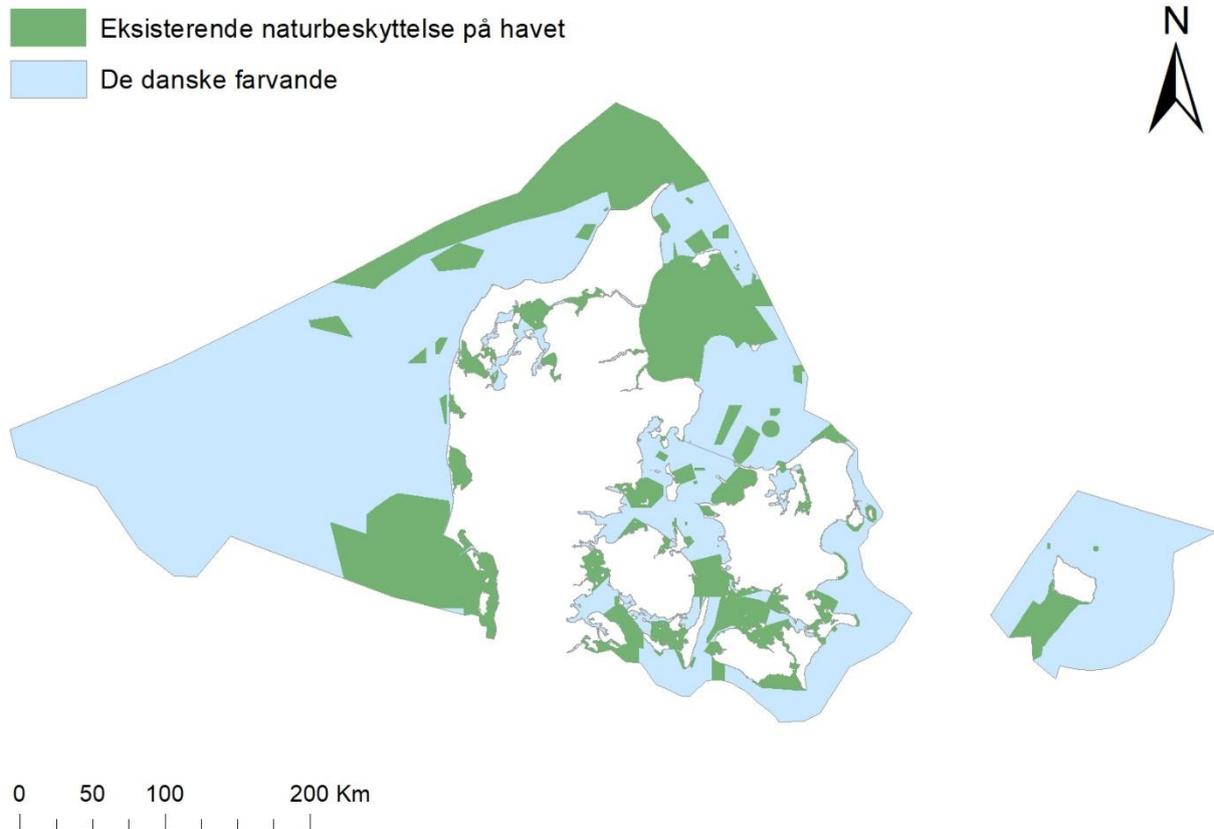
The proposal includes restrictions on activities such as fishing in the new strategic MPAs. According to the proposal prepared, international fisheries data has been obtained from the following EU countries: Sweden, Finland, Germany, Belgium, France, the Netherlands, Poland, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia.

Timeline for the proposal of new strategic MPAs, including consultation process and other public involvement

The proposal to delimit concrete areas can be found in Annex 1. The proposal will be released for a 12-week public consultation later in the year, during which it will be possible to comment on the proposal.

At the same time, the environmental report on the proposal for new strategic MPAs will be uploaded for consultation during the same period on the Ministry of Environment’s website www.mim.dk and on the national “consultation portal” www.hoeringsportalen.dk. The final MPAs will be prepared based on the responses received during the consultation process.

Illustration 1: Delimitation of the waters of the North Sea (including Skagerrak) and internal Danish waters.



Background to proposal

The Marine Strategy Framework Directive¹ requires EU Member States to develop marine strategies with the aim of achieving good environmental status.

A marine strategy consists of three parts. The first part contains a description of good environmental status, a status assessment and environmental targets. The second part consists of a monitoring programme, and the third part consists of a programme of measures. Marine strategies are updated every six years.

Programme of measures

The programme of measures shall contain those efforts that shall be undertaken in order to achieve or maintain a good environmental status. The programme of

¹ Cf. Directive 2008/56/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 June 2008 establishing a framework for community action in the field of marine environmental policy (Marine Strategy Framework Directive)

measures shall include geographical protective measures which contribute to a cohesive and representative network of MPAs, and which adequately cover the diversity of the individual ecosystems. Furthermore, when preparing the action programme, due consideration shall be taken for the principle of sustainable development and, in particular, for the social and economic consequences of the intended measures.

The full action programme is expected to be released for consultation in parallel to the environmental report on designating MPAs. Therefore, the present delimitation of the environmental assessment applies only to the designation of new strategic MPAs.

The status of the marine environment

The aim of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive is to achieve a good environmental status in the marine environment. The Danish Marine Strategy II Assessment showed that a good status has generally not been achieved in the Danish marine environment.

This assessment is available on the website of the Ministry of Environment of Denmark:

https://mim.dk/media/216857/hsii_foerste_del_-_endelig_udgave.pdf

The background report for the socio-economic analysis is also available on the website of the Ministry of Environment of Denmark:

https://mim.dk/media/216854/sociooekonomisk_analyse.pdf

The revised monitoring programme for the Danish Marine Strategy II was published in July 2020. The monitoring program can be found on the website of the Environmental Protection Agency: <https://mst.dk/media/198773/dhs-ii-overvaagningsprogram.pdf>.

Kind regards,

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