



## P R E S S   R E L E A S E

### **Cutting edge web technology gives sea users a voice**

*Finding Sanctuary* today launches an online tool, the *Interactive Map*, so that people with an interest in the sea can get involved in planning Marine Conservation Zones (MCZs) across the South West.

This project is using cutting-edge web technology to ensure people across the region can get involved and have their say. Everyone with an active interest in the sea, such as fishermen, sea anglers, wildlife watchers, divers, leisure boaters and watersports enthusiasts, are invited to use Finding Sanctuary's Interactive Map to explore which areas of sea are important to them.

Tom Hooper, Finding Sanctuary Project Manager says: "Finding Sanctuary is breaking new ground; we are planning Marine Conservation Zones from the bottom up - by working closely with people who use the sea. The Interactive Map will help us to do this, by encouraging public participation at an unprecedented level."

Tom continues: "*Finding Sanctuary's Interactive Map* lets you create a map showing the sea areas you use and what you know about those areas. For example, if you are a diver, you can map your dive sites and what species you know occur at those sites."

The information that sea users contribute through *Finding Sanctuary's Interactive Map* will help to determine the best locations for MCZs. Finding Sanctuary's aim is to design the MCZs so that they cause the least disturbance to people who use the sea, and have the most benefits for conservation.

Tom explains: "*Finding Sanctuary's Interactive Map* gives everyone with an interest in the sea the opportunity to be involved in shaping the Marine

Conservation Zone network. We want to show that it is possible to protect the marine environment, through a process that represents the interests of a wide range of stakeholders”

The *Interactive Map* also allows you to explore maps showing the extensive layers of information that the project is gathering.

Tom says: “As we gather more information, it will be added to the Interactive Map for you to explore. Already it allows you to investigate where different habitats occur, and the pattern of use by inshore fishermen. As more people contribute information through the Interactive Map, you will be able to view where other recreational and commercial activities take place around the coast. The more people that use the Interactive Map, the better Marine Conservation Zones can be planned”.

To use the Interactive Map to explore your area and share your information visit [www.finding-sanctuary.org](http://www.finding-sanctuary.org) and follow the links to ‘Interactive Map’.

If you don’t have access to the internet but would still like to get involved with Finding Sanctuary please call Finding Sanctuary on 01392 878 328 and we will put you in touch with your local liaison officer.

For more information about Finding Sanctuary visit [www.finding-sanctuary.org](http://www.finding-sanctuary.org) or contact Tom Hooper, Project Manager, Finding Sanctuary on tel: 01392 878327 or mobile: 07771 838533 or email [tom.hooper@southwestfoodanddrink.com](mailto:tom.hooper@southwestfoodanddrink.com)

For more press information please contact Nickie Davies at Positive PR on tel: 01935 389497 or email: [Nickie@positivepr.co.uk](mailto:Nickie@positivepr.co.uk)

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## Notes to Editors:

- Finding Sanctuary is a partnership project between South West Food and Drink, the South West Wildlife Trusts, RSPB, National Trust, Natural England, JNCC and the County Councils of Cornwall, Devon, Dorset and Somerset.
- Finding Sanctuary is working with people who use the sea for their livelihood or leisure to identify Marine Conservation Zones (MCZs) around South West England. The goal of MCZs will be to safeguard and encourage recovery of wildlife and habitat, and to help ensure the long-term sustainability of marine resources in the region.
- Finding Sanctuary has brought together a wide cross-section of marine sea-users and interest groups including scientists, anglers, conservationists and fishermen from the beginning. These stakeholder representatives will explore where MCZs could be located, identify possible conflicts and find ways of working around them.
- Marine Conservation Zones (MCZs) are a new type of Marine Protected Area (MPA) being introduced through the UK Marine and Coastal Access Bill. MCZs will protect nationally important marine wildlife, habitats, geology and geomorphology. Sites will be selected both inshore and offshore, up to mean high water to protect the full range of marine life.
- MCZs together with other types of MPA, will make up an ecologically coherent network of Marine Protected Areas. This means the MPA network will be a collection of areas that work together to provide more benefits than an individual area could on its own. MCZs will have a range of protection levels that reflect the level to which a particular habitat or wider ecosystem needs to be safeguarded.
- The Marine Conservation Zone Project has been established by Defra, Natural England and the Joint Nature Conservation Committee to identify and recommend Marine Conservation Zones (MCZs) to Government. The Marine Conservation Zone Project will be delivered through four regional MCZ projects covering the south-west (Finding Sanctuary), Irish Sea (Irish Sea Conservation Zones), North Sea (Net Gain) and south-east (Balanced Seas). These regional MCZ projects will work with sea users and interest groups to identify MCZs and provide recommendations for sites within their regions to Government.