



Plymouth Sound Dive Club BS-AC Branch 164



Press Release

Marine Protected Areas and you

Monday 19th October 2009. 8pm at the Mount Batten Centre

If you want to discover what's happening with new moves to establish Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) in the south-west and how you can influence the process, come along to the presentation at the Mount Batten Centre at 8pm on Monday 19th October.

The Marine and Coastal Access Bill is currently going through Parliament. Once it becomes law, it will create a new type of MPA, called a Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ). MCZs will protect nationally important marine wildlife, habitats, geology and geomorphology. MCZs, together with other types of MPA, will deliver the Government's aim for an 'ecologically coherent and well-managed network of Marine Protected Areas'.

In the south-west, the 'Finding Sanctuary' project is bringing together sea users and interest groups to develop recommendations on the location of MCZs and how activities within them should be managed. A Steering Group has been appointed to represent sea users' interests during negotiations. The project is also busy gathering information from sea users across the region to build a map of how people use the sea. This information will help the Steering Group to plan MCZs in a way that minimizes impacts to sea users. During this meeting Tom Hooper, Finding Sanctuary's project manager, will describe what MCZs are, how decisions will be made and what this means for you. Tom says: "We believe the success of MCZs depends on involving people who could be affected by these sites from the outset. Whether you are a fishermen, sea angler, diver or sailor, we want to hear your views."

The evening will be introduced by Dr Keith Hiscock of the Marine Biological Association and Plymouth Sound Dive Club who said "Science plays a crucial role in identifying where protected areas can do most good for biodiversity conservation and then in the management of those areas. The south-west has always led the UK in marine conservation and much of the marine conservation science that Government uses comes from research here in Plymouth".

The Centre will be open all evening and Finding Sanctuary representatives will be there to discuss the project from 7pm. Marine life that makes the area out of Plymouth 'special' will be illustrated in a slide show running before the presentation starts. The presentation is from 8pm.

For more information:

Plymouth Sound Dive Club: www.plymouthdivers.org.uk
Mount Batten Watersports Centre: www.mount-batten-centre.com (01752 404567)
Finding Sanctuary: www.finding-sanctuary.org (01392 878327)

Plymouth Sound Dive Club Publicity Officer: John Parlour (07980542044; jon.parlour@btinternet.com)
Further detail on the 19th October event: Keith Hiscock: 01752 406697 / 07833133403;
keith.hiscock@lineone.net

For more information on Finding Sanctuary; Joana Smith 01392 878 327 or email
joana.smith@southwestfoodanddrink.com