



Marine Protected Areas in Ireland

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Bigger and Better Marine Protected Areas

Irish Wildlife Trust



@BiggerBetterMPA



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What is an MPA?

Various definitions...

“A clearly defined geographical space, recognized, dedicated and managed, through legal or other effective means, to achieve the long-term conservation of nature with associated ecosystem services and cultural values.”

- IUCN (2008)

Different types: Multi-use vs. no-take?

Some common characteristics:

- No industrial activities
- Conservation of biodiversity is primary goal (vs. conservation of fish stocks)



Why do we need MPAs?



- increase in species richness
- increase in biomass
- increase in size of fish and shellfish species
- increase in resilience

Marine Ecosystem Services

Biodiversity is not just nice to have – marine ecosystems sustain life on earth (e.g. humans)

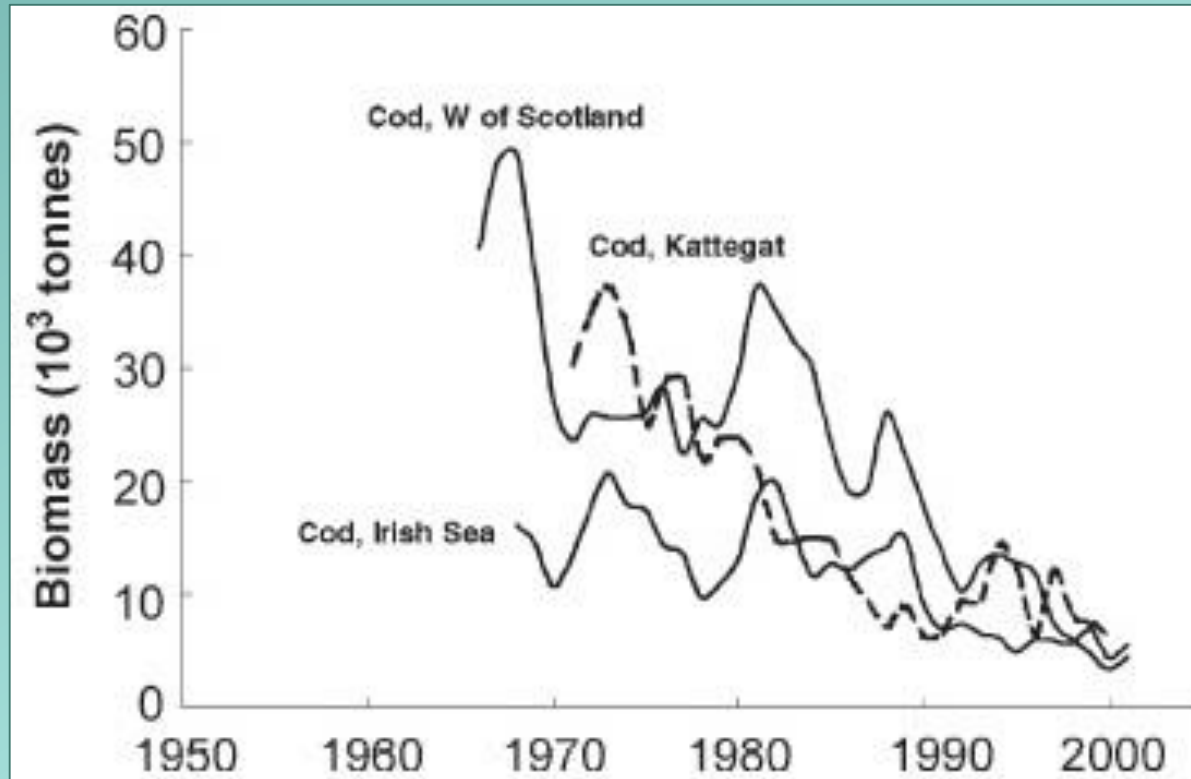
Healthy marine ecosystems provide us with free services such as

- Food provision
- Tourism
- Carbon storage
- Coastal protection



Food provision

Predatory fishes have declined by 90% in the past century



Christensen et.al. (2003). Hundred-year decline of North Atlantic predatory fishes.

Irish Examiner

NEWS SPORT LIFESTYLE BUSINESS PROPERTY OPINION

Minister Creed closes Celtic Sea herring fishery

#Budget18

FRI, 20 SEP, 2019 - 06:40
LORNA SIGGINS

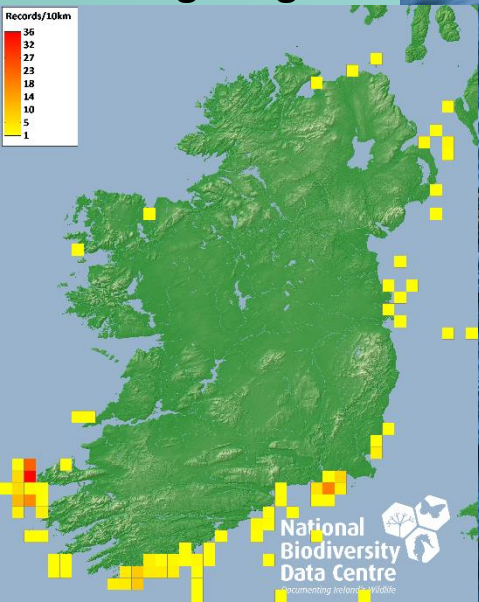
Minister for the Marine Michael Creed has been forced to close the Celtic Sea herring fishery due to a virtual collapse of the multi-million euro stock.

The closure order, which has not yet been released publicly, was issued by Mr Creed 48 hours after the seasonal fishery opened.

The decision was taken due to the small size of fish landed into Ringaskiddy and Castletownbere, Co Cork, and Dingle, Co Kerry, earlier this week. It is

Tourism

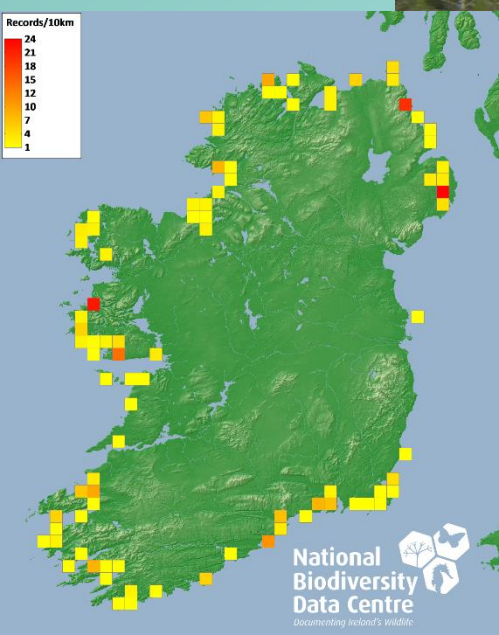
Humpback whale sightings



Carbon storage: Seagrass, a natural solution to climate change



Location of *Zostera marina*



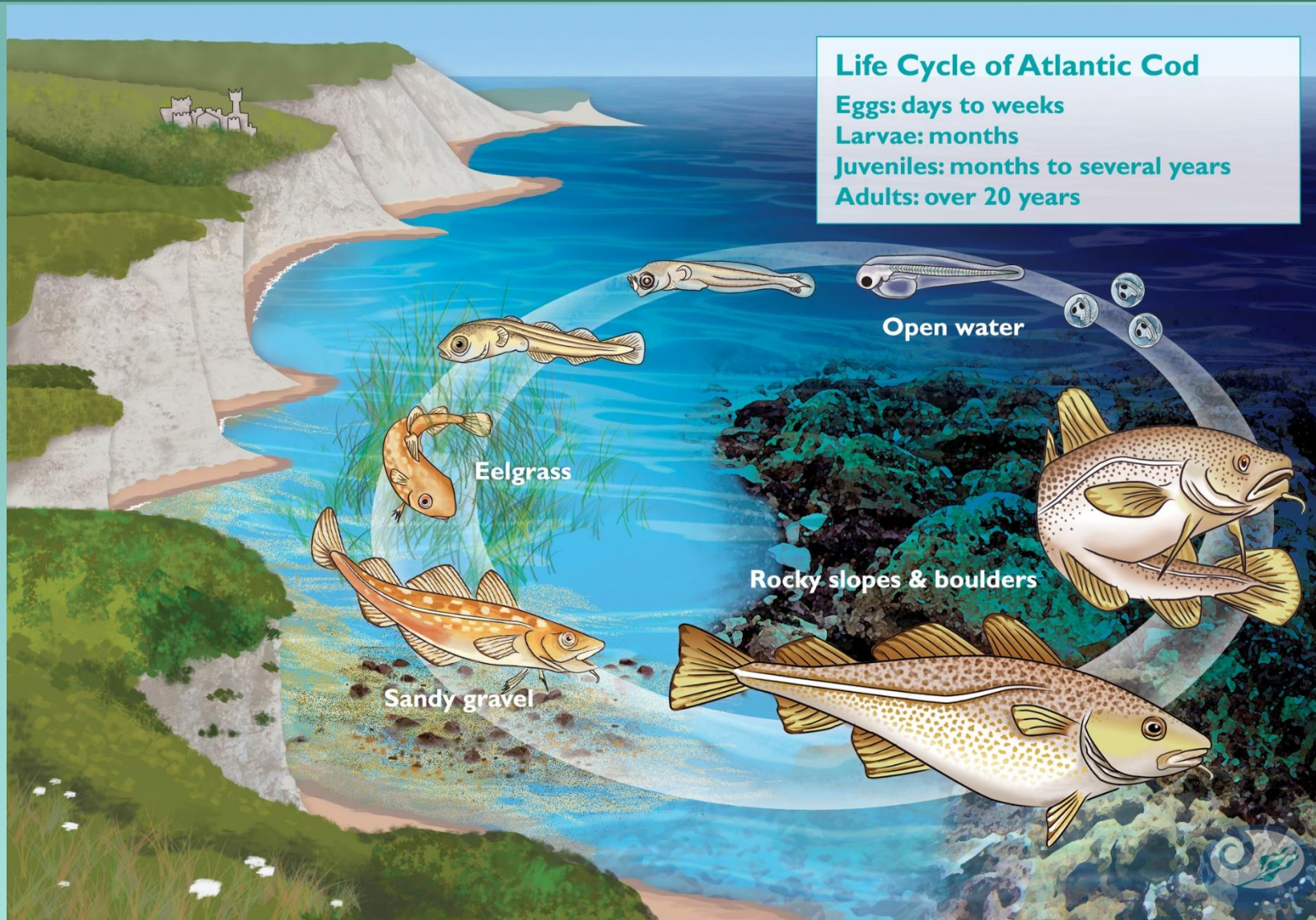
Life Cycle of Atlantic Cod

Eggs: days to weeks

Larvae: months

Juveniles: months to several years

Adults: over 20 years



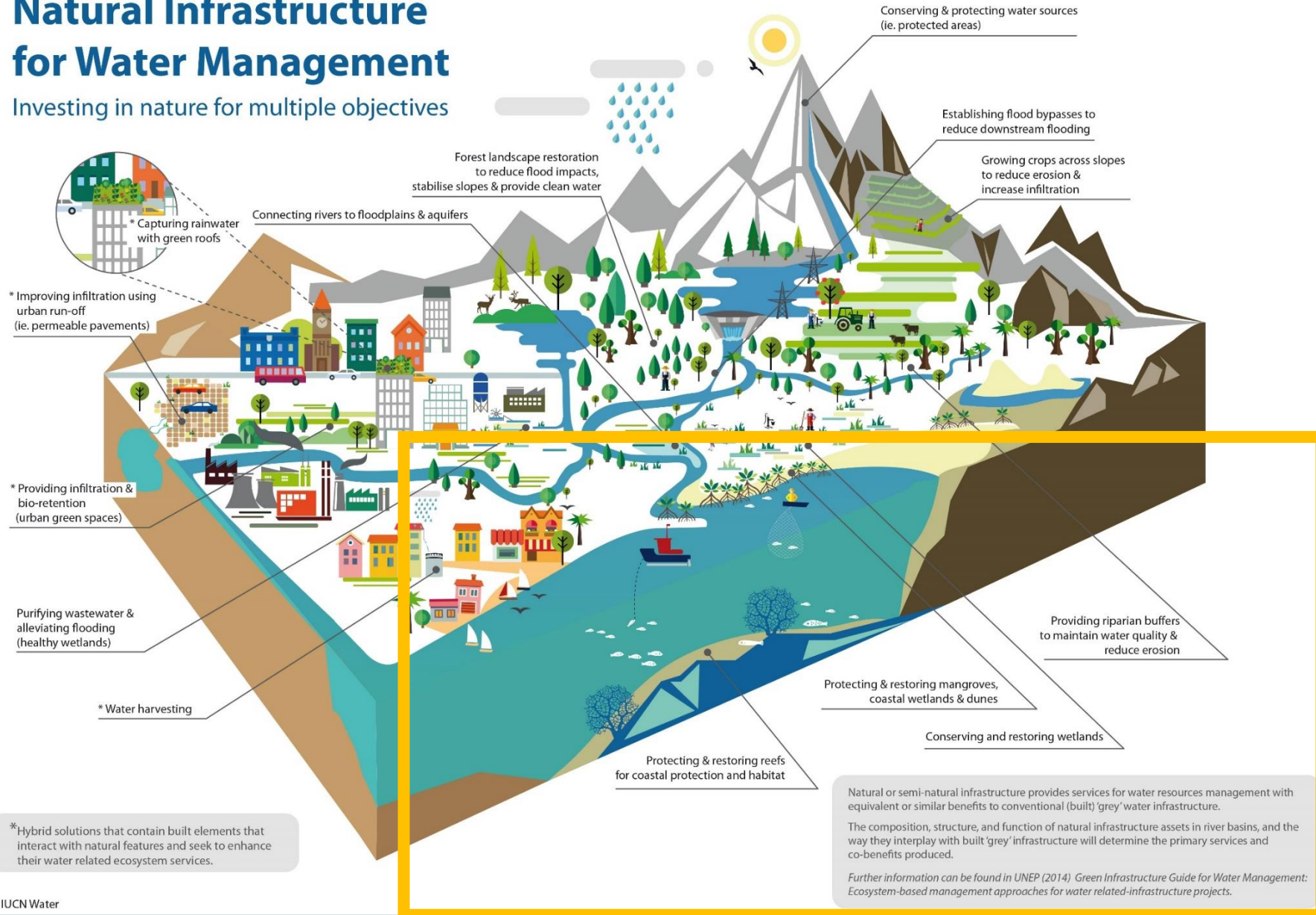
The Atlantic cod uses many habitats throughout its life. Open water, eelgrass beds, sandy and gravel areas, kelp, boulder fields and steep rocky ledges are important for growth and survival during different life stages of this fish.

Art by Molly Thomson

Natural solution to climate change adaptation: Coastal ecosystems

Natural Infrastructure for Water Management

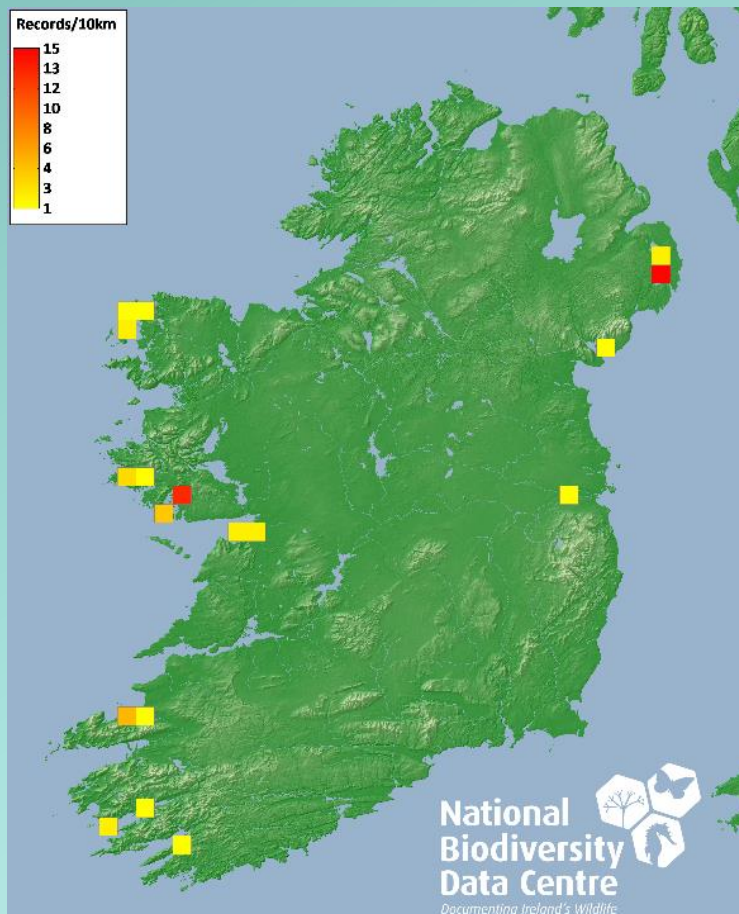
Investing in nature for multiple objectives



The Native Oyster, *Ostrea edulis*

“Oyster dredging grounds extended almost continuously from Wicklow Head to Carnsore Point” - A. E. J. Went, 1963, Dublin Historical Record

Location of *Ostrea edulis*



By Ruddolphous - Own work, CC BY-SA 4.0,

Number of angel sharks in Irish waters have declined by almost 95%

A global refuge for angel shark remains in the Canary Islands.

May 3rd 2019, 10:57 PM



17,309 Views



37 Comments



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THE STOCKS OF angel sharks in Irish waters have declined at an alarming rate over the past 25 years, according to new research.

A study published in ‘[Endangered Species Research](#)’ which analysed angling data over a 40 year period from two angel shark hotspots in Irish waters, Tralee Bay and Clew Bay, revealed that there has been a sharp decline of at least 95% since the 1990s.



Image: Shutterstock/muGobbara

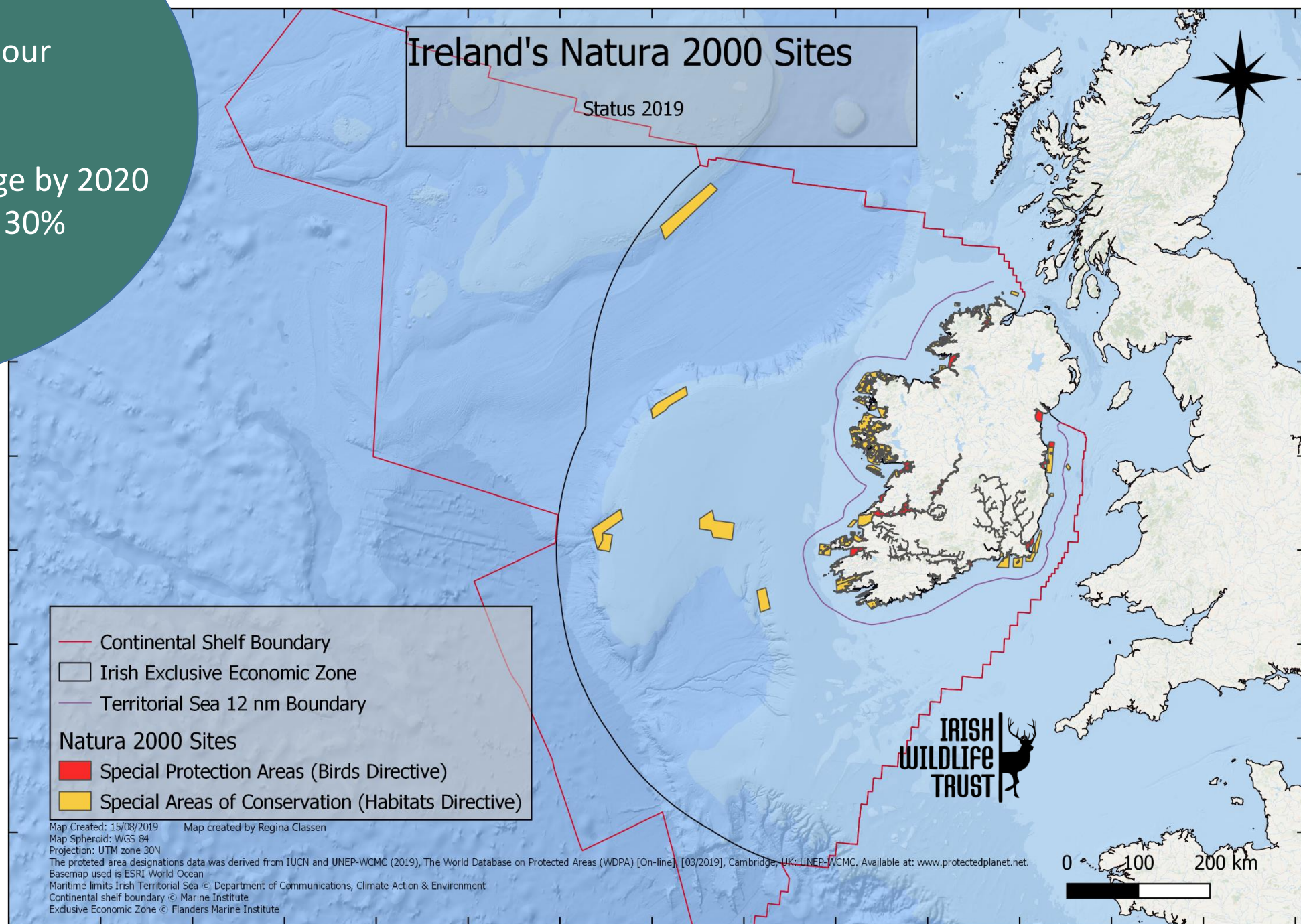
Although a member of the shark family, angel sharks don’t have the classic shark shape, but a flatter appearance and a broad snout. Adults can grow up to two-and-a-half metres long.

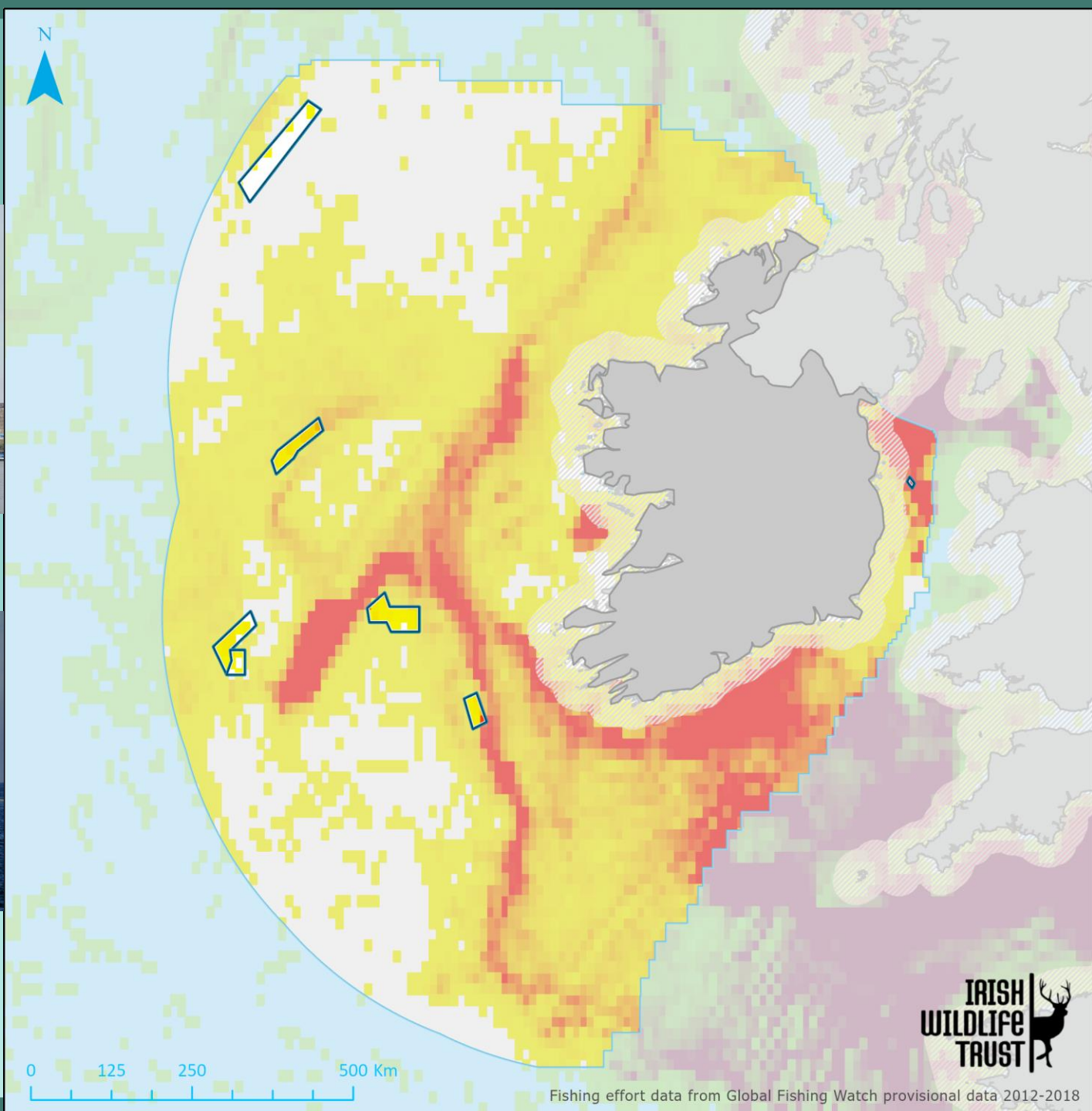
Until the 60s, they could be found all around the Irish coast – but they were targeting in sport angling competitions during the 60s and 70s.

A global refuge for angel shark remains in the Canary Islands some sharks are still occasionally seen in historical hotspots such as Cardigan Bay in Wales and Tralee Bay, Co, Kerry.

According to [Inland Fisheries Inland](#), it has only recorded 20 angel sharks since 200. This

- MPAs cover ~2.4% of our marine region
- Target of 10% coverage by 2020 missed, new target is 30% coverage by 2030





Legend

All towed gear (2015-18)

Total hours

1

>1000



Marine Protected Area



Exclusive Economic Zone



Ireland



Inshore waters

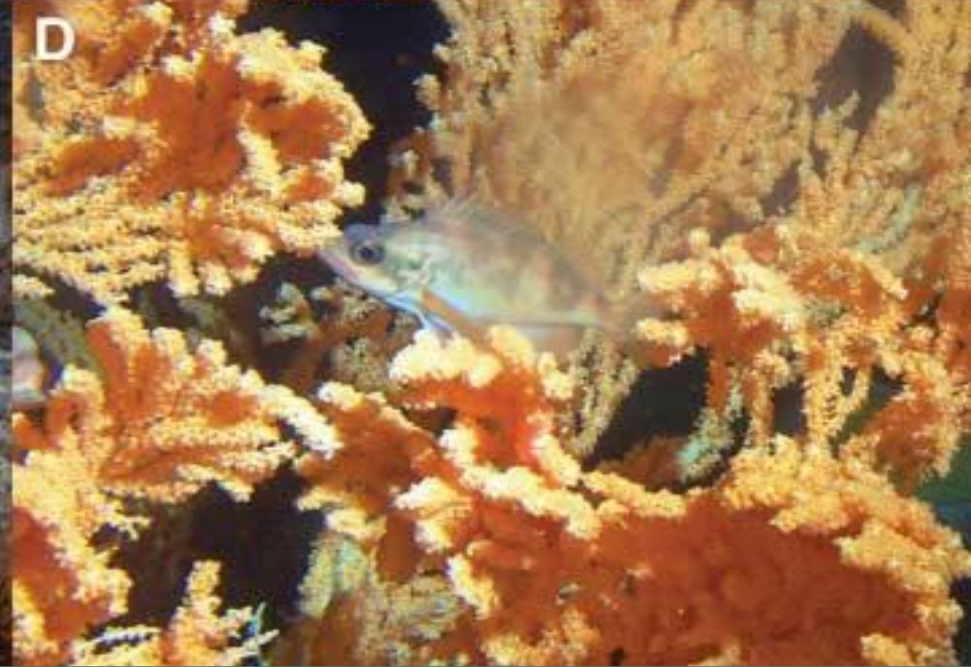
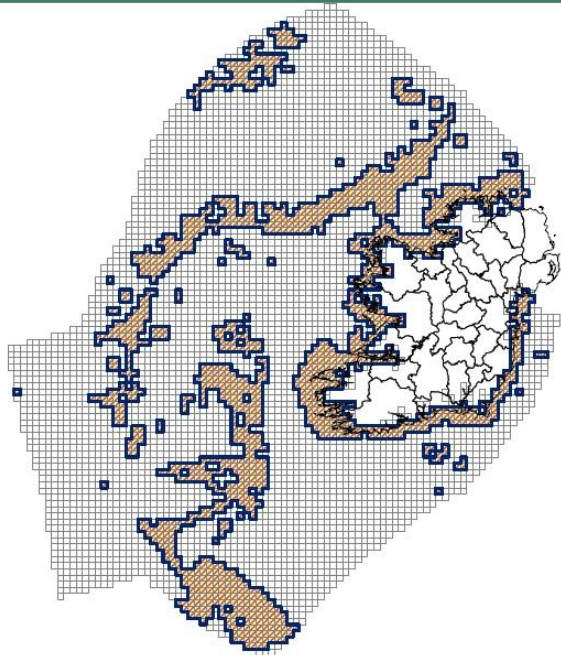


Outside study area



Current levels of protection

Location of reefs



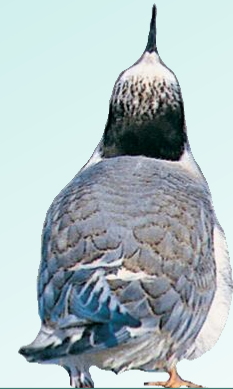
Roberts et. al (2006) Reefs of the Deep: The Biology and Geology of Cold-Water Coral Ecosystems

Current levels of protection



Moving forward

- Designate protected areas with ambitious conservation objectives and management plans
- Protect the whole site, not just individual features
- RESTORE seagrass, oysters and other bivalve reefs, saltmarsh, kelp, and rebuild fisheries
- Include stakeholders at every step
- Invest \$\$\$



“A call for collective action” – Ministers O’Brien and Noonan receive expert report on Marine Protected Area expansion

Published on Thursday, 22 Oct 2020



- **Report will assist Government in meeting its target of 10% of Ireland’s maritime area to be Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) as soon as is practicable, aiming for 30% by 2030**
- **Public consultation on report to begin later this year**

Minister Darragh O’Brien T.D., Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage, and Minister of State Malcolm Noonan T.D. today received the final report of an independent advisory group on Marine Protected Areas (MPAs). The report explores the need to expand Ireland’s MPA network, the benefits and costs of doing so, and how Ireland should go about doing it.

Thank You!



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