

Bembridge Ledge,
Isle of Wight



UK's protected 'blue belt'

RYA meets Minister to discuss Marine Conservation Zones

The RYA met with the Marine Environment Minister, George Eustice MP, in April to discuss the impact the remaining tranches of Marine Conservation Zones (MCZs) could have on recreational boating.

Since 2013, Defra has designated 50 MCZs in England and over the past few months, preparations have begun to designate a further tranche.

Initial recommendations for the location of the areas to be protected were made by four stakeholder-led Regional Projects in 2011. The Government is currently identifying gaps in the network that could be filled by the remainder of the 127 recommended MCZs, of which just over 50 have not been designated or removed from consideration.

In 2018, the Government will designate a third tranche. These are expected to complete their contribution to an ecologically coherent and well-managed ecological network of Marine Protected Areas.

The Government has also announced the possibility that this tranche could include sites proposed by third parties for the conservation of highly mobile species, such as whales, dolphins, birds, fish, sharks and rays. A consultation ran during July to enable additional sites to be submitted for consideration.

We continue to meet regularly with Defra, Natural England and the Marine Management Organisation to ensure that impact on sea users is minimised, with clear information provided on management measures and early, detailed local engagement with RYA members prior to the formal consultation in 2017.

Marina hosepipes: A risk to drinking water quality?

Following two incidents, Portsmouth Water has written to marinas within its area to remind them of the importance of maintaining water quality

Earlier this year, Premier Marinas advised berth holders and visitors at Chichester Marina, West Sussex, that hoses will no longer be available and that other marinas in the Solent area were likely to do the same. The RYA has also heard from a small number of members who have been required to supply their own hoses following inspections by water companies.

Risks are ever present in all water systems, including marinas. Water companies have identified hosepipes in marinas as a particular area of risk in terms of drinking water contamination, and incidents are reportable to the drinking water quality regulator. The Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations (and Byelaws in Scotland) cover these issues to protect public health and safeguard water supplies.

Contamination can occur by backflow that could cause drinking water supplies on boats, elsewhere in the marina or in the surrounding area to be contaminated. This could be from chemicals or disease-causing microorganisms from other sources, eg sewage, puddles, river or sea water. One example is if a hose is not properly shut off and water pressure drops (eg from demands in the marina or local vicinity) or is cut off, creating a syphon effect, sucking liquid back into the water supply and contaminating it. In marinas, this could easily happen as a result of hosepipes being left connected and in the water.



By working with their local water company, marinas can assist in identifying potential contamination risks and implement a range of options including installation of backflow-prevention devices, such as break tanks, where needed, in order to protect the drinking water supplies from being contaminated.

The Water Regulations Advisory Scheme (WRAS) has issued Information and Guidance Notes for ports and marinas, available at www.wras.co.uk/consumers/resources/publications. The RYA will be working with water companies and WRAS in the coming months to update and improve this guidance in light of recent member feedback.

MORE INFORMATION
For more information, contact environment@rya.org.uk

