

Project title: Work towards identifying, establishing and optimising Marine Protected Areas (MPA's) in the United Kingdom.

Intermediate Report May 2007

Partners:

The Deep (a charitable public aquarium)
Marine Conservation Society (foremost UK marine charity)
BIAZA (the UK zoo and Aquarium professional body)
NAW (the informal grouping of all UK public aquariums)
BSAC (the British Sub Aqua Association)

Project outline:

The Marine Conservation Society is running a national signature campaign to lobby the UK government to include MPA's as an integral part of the proposed new Marine Bill. This is a new item of legislation currently being drafted, which addresses all aspects of the use, utilisation and protection of marine resources in UK territorial waters.

At the current time only 0.0002% of the UK coastline is designated as MPA's.

The campaign is being coordinated within the UK public aquarium sector by staff members of The Deep.

To date over 30 institutions have committed to running the campaign throughout 2007 and all of these institutions will be delivering talks to the general public on the issue as well as gathering signatures in support of the campaign. The display materials will vary at each institutions depending upon their own resources and area available. The consistent elements include "Marine Reserves Now" posters (supplied by MCS), signature station and a laminated map of the UK on which the public can place post-it notes with explanations of why specific areas should receive protection. Although there will be input from staff at each of these institutions their contribution does not form part of this funding request as each institution has committed its own resources to the project.

A separate funding application, made by MCS, addresses the issue of the production of a larger travelling display unit, which will tour the UK spending approximately 1 week at each institution. Again this unit is not the subject of this funding request.

Although the campaign will run for a full year from the 10th of March 2007 an interim report will be prepared in November 2007 and presented at the Annual National Aquarium Workshop (NAW) which is being held at Deep Sea World, Scotland on the 15th to 18th of November.

At strategic points throughout the national campaign MCS will collate all signatures and the post-it notes to build up a picture of the level of support.

The campaign is supported by national and regional PR campaigns and the official launch of the project takes place on the 10th of March at the National Dive show supported by the British Sub Aqua Association.

At the end of the project the collated petition will be submitted to the UK government by MCS.

Progress to date

Nationally the participating institutions, which now total 33, have been implementing their own strategies for promoting the key aims and objectives of the campaign.

To date a total of 20,000 signatures have been secured from online signatures and paper signatures.

At The Deep a semi permanent display was designed and commissioned using a local Exhibition Design company (Spiff Design Ltd). This exhibit comprises the bulk of the money being claimed.

As an intermediate solution a small video display unit was used to display a promotional video prepared by the Marine Conservation Society and to collect signatures from our visitors so as to not lose out on the vital Easter trade.

The new larger exhibition is now in place and signatures and support has been steadily growing. To date The Deep has secured well over 1000 signatures.

Please find below an image of the display which incorporates a 42" plasma screen (our own), an information panel and a section where visitors can fill in a post it note with the location and justification for various areas of the coastline which need conservation.



In addition to the display material we have also conducted a small PR campaign locally to raise awareness of the campaign. Some images from this are attached below.



Deep staff promoting the campaign.



Local TV news presenting team supporting the campaign.

Although at the present time the campaign is running alongside our current theme within the attraction which is promoting a new exhibition we have committed to dedicating interpretation time and marketing time to promoting the event during the month of October this year. This will provide a vital boost to the campaign prior to the next key date which is the summary of activities prior to the presentation of the results at the National Aquarium Workshop in mid November.