Zonal demarcations in the Channel
Operational limits and special reserve areas

Reference points

**RAMSAR sites**

1. Golfe du Morbihan (Brittany)
2. Baie du Mont Saint-Michel (Lower-Normandie)
3. Marais du Cotentin et du Bessin, baie de Veys (Lower-Normandie)
4. Baie de Somme (Picardy)
5. Le marais audomarois (North Pas-de-Calais)
6. Abberton reservoir (Essex)
7. Benfleet & Southend Marshes (Essex)
8. Blackwater Estuary (Essex)
9. Lee Valley (Essex)
10. Thames Estuary and Marshes (Essex)
11. Avon Valley (West Sussex)
12. Chichester & Langstone Harbours (West Sussex)
13. Pagham Harbour (West Sussex)
14. Peversey Levels (East Sussex)
15. Chels Beach & The Fleet (Dorset)
16. Dorset heathlands (Dorset)
17. Exe Estuary (Devon)
18. Isles of Scilly (Cornwall and Isles of Scilly)
19. Solent and Southampton Water (Hampshire)
20. The New Forest (Hampshire)
21. Somerset Levels and Moors (Somerset)
22. Stodmarsh (Kent)
23. Thanet Coast & Sandwich Bay (Kent)
24. The Swale (Kent)
25. Thursley and Ockley Bog (Surrey)
26. Walmore Common (Gloucestershire)
27. South West London Waterbodies (London)
28. Poole Harbour (Poole UA)
29. Portsmouth Harbour (UA)
30. Medway Estuary & Marshes (Medway UA)

**Location of RAMSAR sites**

**Natura 2000 network**

Natura 2000 is the EU-wide network of protected sites established under the Birds Directive (SPA) and the Habitats Directive (SAC).

**Special Area of Conservation (SAC)**

A site designation specified in the Habitats Directive. Each site is designated for one or more of the habitats and species listed in the Directive. The Directive requires a management plan to be prepared and implemented for each SAC to ensure the favourable conservation status of the habitats or species for which it was designated.

**Special Protection Area (SPA)**

A site of European Community importance designated under the Wild Birds Directive.

**Ramsar Convention**

Ramsar Convention was adopted on 02 February 1971 in Ramsar (Iran). It is an international treaty for the conservation and sustainable utilization of wetlands in order to stem the progressive encroachment on and loss of wetlands now and in the future, recognising the fundamental ecological functions of wetlands and their economic, cultural, scientific, and recreational value.

The multiplication of activities has progressively led to their being assigned boundaries and specially reserved zones. Indeed historically, it is in the Channel that the first legally established boundaries based on international law (Bay of Granville Convention 1839-1843) were introduced.

As such the sea component of the Channel has become increasingly viewed in territorial terms. Internally, it is therefore organised with reference to marine area use plans. By identifying the zonal boundaries, the areas of jurisdiction and those parts reserved for specific activities, the Channel is aspiring to become a fully managed, developed as well as protected space.

Above all the whole area is defined by the management limits in question, the first of which are the territorial sea limits within which French and British sovereignty reigns, including those specific to the Channel Islands. Superimposed on this first level are additional areas of maritime responsibility defining where French and British authorities are allowed intervene in the event of an accident. These areas of responsibility are between those covered by sea rescue and surveillance centres in France (CROSS: Regional Operational Centre of Surveillance and Sea Rescue) and in England (MRCC: Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre). The latter are tasked with keeping an eye on maritime traffic and carrying out rescue missions in the event of accidents or shipwrecks.

The maritime use plan additionally takes account of zones reserved for any specific resource development. Fishing zones established by the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) cover the whole of the Channel. These allow for a regular census of the resource fished by the various maritime professionals. These broadly defined zones encompass more restricted areas reserved for the extraction of aggregates, shellfish farming and operation of offshore wind farms.

Finally, it should be emphasised that this system of the superimposition of boundaries and zones defined over decades is itself further subject to a wide array of regulations categorising the parts of the area to be set aside for protecting biodiversity. Protected marine areas belong to this category, as do RAMSAR sites, special protection and conservation zones as well as the Natura 2000 network.

The schema produced by this series of boundaries – albeit invisible to the naked eye – underpins the overall Channel marine use management plan.