



**Miljøministeriet**  
Naturstyrelsen

# **ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT ON PROTECTED AREAS IN THE DANISH PART OF KATTEGAT**

## **SUMMARY FOR ESPOO CONSULTATION**

## Non-technical summary

The environmental impact assessment describes the likely and significant impacts on the environment from establishing marine protected areas in the Danish part of Kattegat under the programme of measures in the Danish Marine Strategy. The Environmental Report has been prepared in accordance with the EU directive on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment.

The proposal designates six areas in the Danish part of Kattegat to be protected from activities which physically impact the seabed, e.g. fisheries with bottom-towed gear extraction of raw materials, and dumping of dredged seabed sediment from harbours and channels.

The proposal emphasises establishing appropriate protection of the deep soft seabed to protect some of the endangered and vulnerable soft-seabed species, while at the same time ensuring the fewest possible socio-economic consequences.

In overall terms the proposal is assessed to have a favourable impact on the marine environment. The new protected areas, together with the existing protected areas (Natura 2000), will establish a coherent and representative network of protected areas adequately covering the diversity of the constituent ecosystems. The proposal will establish areas where communities of vulnerable species can live undisturbed (e.g. communities of horse mussel (*Modiolus modiolus*), common sea pen (*Pennatula phosphorea*) and burrowing megafauna), which will be reflected in strengthened habitats and possible increases in biodiversity.

Designation will also secure that the areas in the future will be protected from physical impacts, even if fisheries patterns change, for example. Protection will therefore contribute to achieve the goal in the Marine Strategy Framework Directive of good environmental status in the sea by 2020.

The environmental impact assessment shows that there are very limited negative environmental impacts from the proposed protection of the areas, and that overall these are far less than the environmental benefits that will be achieved.

The annual value of fisheries catches using bottom-towed gear in the areas totals DKK 0.5-1.0 mill. for Danish fishermen. This corresponds to about 1% of the registered landing value for Danish vessels using this type of gear in the Danish part of Kattegat. Fishing vessels can fish for their quotas in fisheries throughout all of Kattegat. Therefore the overall assessment is that protection of the proposed areas will only have a limited impact on the specific fisheries possibilities and the derived economic activity in fishing harbours. However, it is likely that, to a certain extent, the location of the areas could make fishing more difficult and costly, because there may be situations in which it is no longer possible to fish in continuous trawls as previously.

There are no recovery areas for either oil, gas or shale gas, nor for sand, gravel and pebbles in the areas designated, neither are there designated dumping areas for dredged sediment from harbours or similar. Furthermore the proposal is not likely to affect the activities by the Danish Defence Command at sea, nor will it conflict with offshore-windfarm planning.

In order to meet the goal in the Marine Strategy Framework Directive to achieve or maintain a good environmental status in the marine environment by 2020, the assessment is that there is an obligation to establish protection of parts of the deep soft seabed in the Danish part of Kattegat. A requirement in an environmental assessment is that possible alternatives should be investigated. As it has been assessed that

there is a need to designate a number of protected areas, the alternative to the proposed areas will be designation of other areas of the deep soft seabed.

An inter-ministerial working group comprising the Ministry of the Environment, the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Fisheries has assessed several other areas and concluded that the proposed areas will give the best balance between protection and exploitation.

After the decision to designate marine protected areas in the Danish part of Kattegat, a survey (baseline) of the nature in the areas designated will be carried out, and monitoring of developments in the areas will be initiated. The areas will be subject to the fisheries monitoring in Kattegat.

## **Cross-border impacts**

The proposal to protect six areas in the Danish part of Kattegat from physical impacts on the seabed will establish areas in which habitats for vulnerable species could be completely undisturbed in the long term, and this could be reflected in strengthening of the habitats and possible increases in biodiversity.

The six protected areas will probably also be able to contribute an improved food basis for other marine species, including fish and lobsters, and in the long term this could benefit the individual populations. Further to this, the protected areas could also act as a base from where colonisation of other areas can take place.

Assessments show that there will only be limited negative cross-border impacts, and only for fishing with bottom-towed gear.

Swedish and German fishermen also have fishing rights and fish in the Danish part of Kattegat. A screening of Swedish and German fishing activity with bottom-towed gear has been made on the basis of VMS data (satellite data) for the period 2010-2012. The screening shows that there is limited fisheries activity from Swedish vessels in the proposed areas, and that such activity is primarily in areas b and c. Similarly, the screening shows very limited German fisheries activity in the proposed areas.

Stopping fishing with bottom-towed gear in the proposed protected areas could mean a slight increase in fishing with bottom trawls in other areas. Assessments show a relatively small loss for fisheries in landings from the proposed areas (see below) and therefore relatively modest additional fishing in other areas. The protected areas help in particular the vulnerable species which are harmed by bottom trawling by establishing a natural retreat. Possible additional fishing using bottom trawls in other areas with a soft seabed is not deemed to have a significant negative additional impact on the flora or fauna on the seabed, as this has already been exposed to bottom trawling.

Introduction of fisheries management initiatives in the European Union should be in accordance with provisions laid down in the Common Fisheries Policy. Therefore, these initiatives apply for fishing vessels from all Member States. This process will take place after a final national decision on which areas are to be finally proposed for protection, and include regional coordination. This process will include a more detailed analysis of the landing values in the proposed areas for Swedish and German fishing vessels.



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