

MCZ

The marine life of Newquay and the Gannel Marine Conservation Zone

by Andrew Ball & Tom Daguerre

In 2009 the UK Government passed The Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009. This enabled Marine Conservation Zones (MCZs) to be designated anywhere in English and Welsh territorial and UK offshore waters. Lundy Island, a former Marine Nature Reserve in the Bristol Channel, became the UK's first MCZ in January 2010.

In 2013 twenty-seven MCZs were designated around the English Coast, and in 2016 a further 23 were put in place. In total, these 50 MCZs protect an area equal to 7,886sq miles, around the same size of Wales. Next year we will see a third assessment phase, hopefully designating more MCZs across the UK.

But what exactly do MCZs do? MCZs are designated to protect specific features, either habitats or species, that are unique to a given area. These features have an inherent value to biodiversity, making it vital they have an adequate level of protection. The conservation objective for MCZs is to use management approaches to maintain these protected features, or if damaged, help them to recover.

Management decisions are on a site-by-site basis, where activities, such as fishing or construction, may be restricted or forbidden within the MCZ depending on the sensitivity of the protected features to these activities.

Protecting these areas is not an easy task and is an ongoing process. A vital step in protection is raising awareness. How can we educate the wider public as to what is happening to our oceans on a basic level? How can we make people aware of the rich variety of life in our seas?

Cornwall based community interest company (C.I.C) Hydro Motion Media has embarked upon a journey to tackle these issues. Documenting marine life through film and photography, the company raises awareness of the amazing diversity that exists in Cornwall and across the UK.

The company provide their services on a voluntary or cost basis to promote marine conservation and educate the wider community about the marine environment. Working from this ethos has helped Hydro Motion Media become consultants for



the Royal Society of Wildlife Trusts and Natural England, as well as working closely with multiple local conservation groups. They have produced over 15 different films on UK marine life that are playing in education centres around the country and are available free online.

Hydro Motion Media's biggest project to date is their new film "‘MCZ’ The marine life of Newquay and the Gannel Marine Conservation Zone". The film will explore the different habitats of the MCZ, from the offshore reefs home to corals and anemones to the humble rockpool. It will reveal species never before captured on film, examining the fascinating lives of these hidden creatures, and illustrate the amazing diversity that exists in our oceans to justify why we must protect them.

Hydro Motion Media ran a crowdfunder campaign to raise the money to make this film, they were also awarded a small grant from seachangers.org. In keeping with their community investment commitment as a registered C.I.C, the documentary will be provided as a free resource to raise awareness of marine life across the UK. It will be screened at schools and colleges, film festivals and other marine conservation events to show the importance of protecting our oceans on a local and global scale.

Amongst the protected features of Newquay and Gannel MCZ is the rare Giant goby *Gobius cobitis*. As well as being Britain's largest goby, growing up to 27cm, it is also protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. Within the Newquay and the Gannel MCZ there exists a protective refuge for this species in a network of rockpools. However, this refuge sits next to one of the UK's busiest beaches. The film will look at the comparison between man and fish to illustrate



The giant goby has a huge head and mouth, it is a top predator in the rockpool. Canon G16 with Fantasea housing, 2 x Light & Motion Sidekick Duo f/2.8 1/125 ISO 80

the fragility of nature and mankind's increasing impeachment into wild spaces.

Another target species for the film will be the pink sea fan *Eucinella verrucosa*. For those who haven't had the pleasure of diving on pink sea fan reefs in the UK, well known to divers who have dived the Cornwall Manacles MCZ, it is only on closer inspection that you discover something incredible. Its branches host three separate invertebrates: the sea fan false cowrie *Simnia hiscocki*, the sea fan anemone *Amphianthus dohrnii*, and the nudibranch *Tritonia nilsohdneri*. All three species can be found living on these fans, and if you're lucky enough to come across it, sometimes all together simultaneously. They are all dependent on the sea fan for their existence, illustrating how important a single species can be in maintaining biodiversity.

The Pink Sea Fan is a UK BAP priority



The pink sea fan anemone . Canon G16 with Fantasea housing, INON UCL-165 x 2 stacked, 2 x Light & Motion Sidekick Duo f/2.8 1/320 ISO 500

species of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006. Furthermore, it is a nationally scarce species, protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (protected from being sold, offered for sale or being held or transported for sale either live or dead, whole or part) and listed as globally vulnerable on the IUCN Red List.

Despite its biological importance and

The pink sea fan False Cowrie Canon G16 with Fantasea housing, INON UCL-165 x 2 stacked, 2 x Light & Motion Sidekick Duo f/2.8 1/320 ISO 500



protective legislation, pink sea fan habitat is very vulnerable, especially to netting from fishing boats. Amazingly pink sea fan reefs have been recorded just outside the boundary of the Newquay and Gannel MCZ. The film will raise awareness of this fact and add weight to the case to extend the boundary lines to include these ecosystems.

Filming for the documentary will include the use of both modern and innovative techniques. Super slow mo, time-lapse and 4k will be used to open the window on a world beneath the waves not seen before. Specially developed macro videography will expose the most intricate detail of even the very tiniest inhabitant of the MCZ. The film has focus on the lesser known inhabitants of the Cornish coast, giving a unique view of the sub marine.

As underwater photographers,

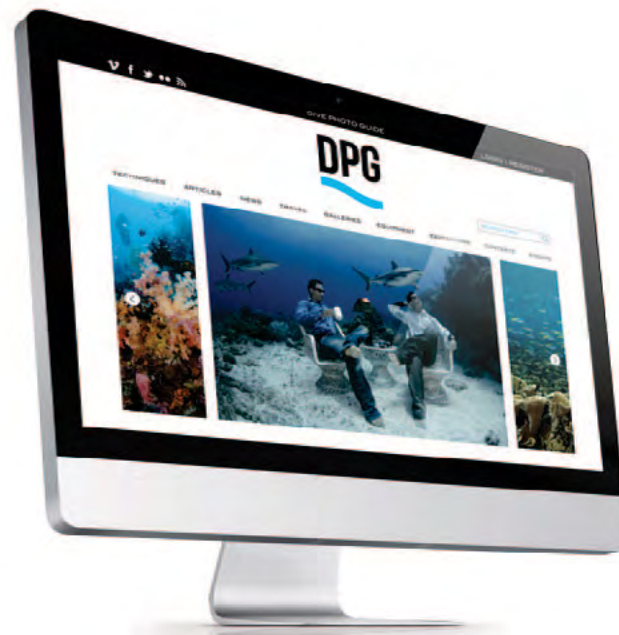
we take beautiful images of the life in the oceans. Imagery is an immensely powerful tool, it can change the way we think and can be used to inspire people to respect and protect the oceans. Through "MCZ : The marine life of Newquay and the Gannel Marine Conservation Zone" we hope to help achieve this.

If you want to follow our progress on the film, as well as our other work, follow our Facebook page 'Hydro Motion Media C.I.C' at <https://www.facebook.com/HydroMotionMedia/>. Alternatively, if you want to get in touch you can send us an email at

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**Andrew Ball
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