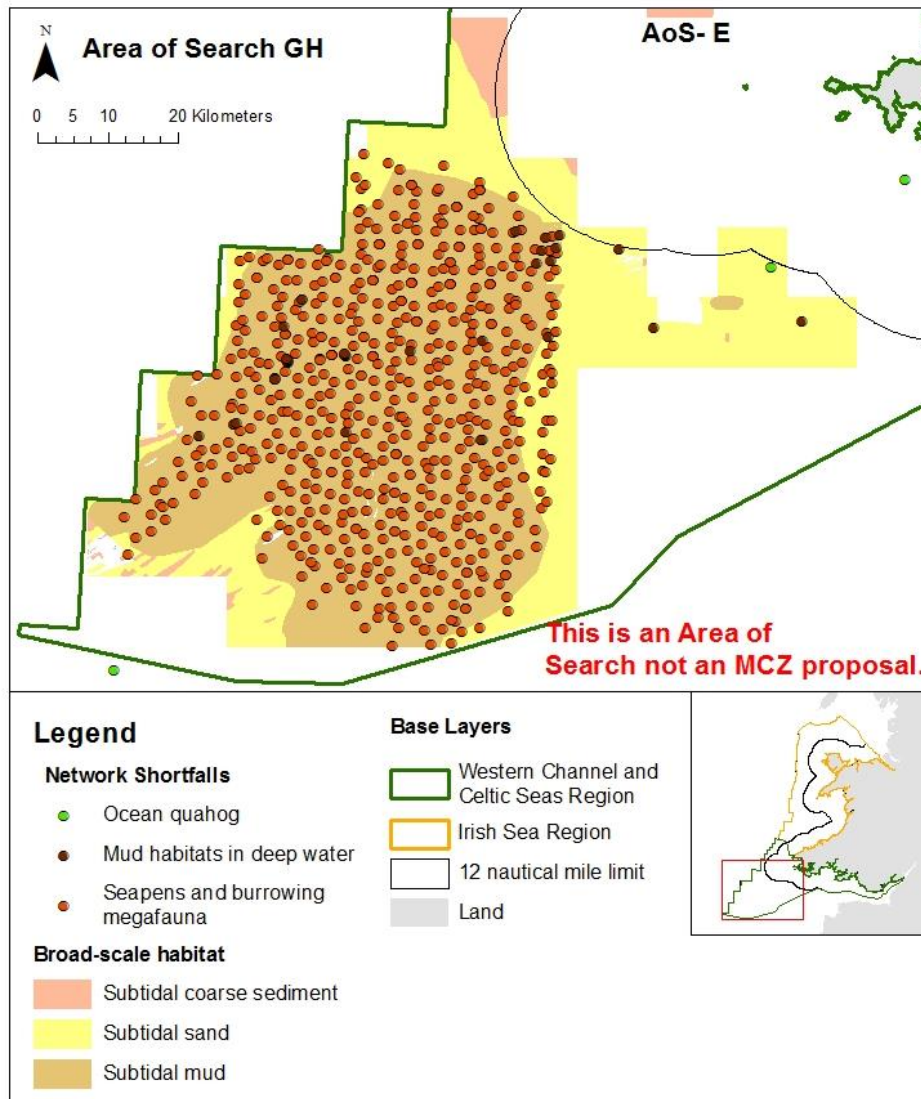


Fact sheet: Area of Search A (AoS-GH)

This Area of Search fact sheet is a summary of information provided in the 'Overview of Area of Search within Welsh Waters' which should be referred to for further information and justification. Frequently Asked Questions and the Process Document are available on the project website for further context.



| | |
|--------------------------|--|
| Area of Search | AoS-GH |
| Regional Sea | Western Channel and Celtic Seas |
| General location | The south west extent of Welsh offshore waters, around Celtic Deep |
| Size | 4,526km ² |
| Inshore/offshore | Inshore and offshore (predominantly offshore) ¹ |
| Brief description | The area is dominated by subtidal mud in the centre with subtidal sand surrounding it and patches of subtidal coarse sediment. The northern tip of the area contains a greater extent of subtidal coarse sediment and sand. Records of sea-pens and burrowing megafauna communities are located across the subtidal mud extent with records of mud habitats in deep water. A single ocean quahog record is present in the east of the area |

¹ Inshore waters are those between the mean high water spring tide and the 12 nautical mile limit of territorial seas. Offshore waters are those between the 12 nautical mile limit of territorial seas and the median line.





| Shortfall Feature | Justification |
|--|---|
| Mud habitats in deep water | Opportunities to fully address shortfall in Western Channel and Celtic Seas region |
| Subtidal sand | Opportunities to fully address shortfall in Western Channel and Celtic Seas region |
| Subtidal coarse sediment | Opportunities to fully address shortfall in Western Channel and Celtic Seas region |
| Subtidal mud | Only opportunity to fully address shortfall in Western Channel and Celtic Seas region |
| Ocean quahog | Opportunities to fully address shortfall in Western Channel and Celtic Seas region |
| Seapens and burrowing megafauna communities | Only opportunity to fully address shortfall in Western Channel and Celtic Seas region |
| Justification: Depth zones | |
| AoS-GH is predominantly offshore, it would contribute greatly to the connectivity network principle by providing representation of broad-scale habitat features in deeper waters | |

Activities within Area of Search GH:

- Oil and Gas pipelines
- Demersal fishing activity (vessels 12m and over)

Other fishing activities are known to potentially occur within this area (e.g. demersal fisheries of under 12m vessels). However, we do not have comprehensive up to date data to include at this point. We recognise that further discussions are needed to establish key areas for other fishing activities

What are Areas of Search (AoS)?

Welsh Government, NRW and JNCC have worked with the MPA Network Completion Project Task and Finish Group (TFG) to identify Areas of Search within Welsh waters.

The aim is to focus attention on key areas which could address network shortfalls within Welsh waters. As presented in the process below, AoS are identified within Broad Areas of Search. Possible MCZs will then be identified from the AoS. **The AoS are larger than the shortfall requirement to allow a number of options to be developed and refined later on in the process.** Please see the Process Document and the Overview of Areas of Search within Welsh Waters for more information (available on the project website).

