

HALTING THE DECLINE OF THREATENED SPECIES AND HABITATS

Why is this important?

The North-East Atlantic is home to a diverse range of species, from colourful algae in the coastal zones to powerful marine mammals roaming the high seas. Marine species and habitats are declining and disappearing, and priority action is needed to protect the biodiversity of our ocean. It is a challenging task. We have much to learn about the marine environment and how best to save species from extinction and habitats from destruction. Successful protection of these species and habitats on a global level requires regional action: the transboundary nature of the marine environment puts OSPAR in a strong position to cost effectively develop the evidence and measures to halt further biodiversity loss through protection and conservation efforts.

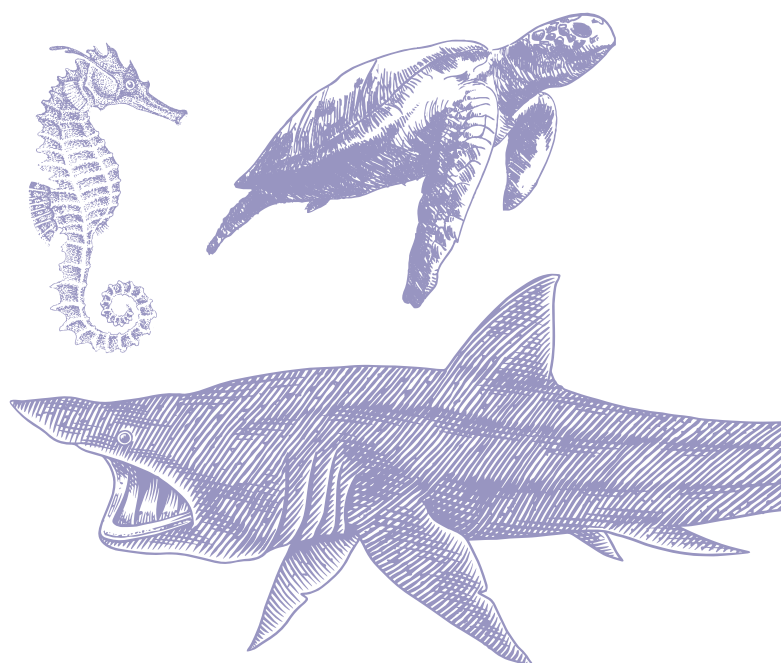
What is OSPAR doing?

OSPAR has already implemented 56 measures to protect species and habitats: 4 to protect invertebrates such as molluscs and crustaceans; 9 to protect seabird species; 21 to protect bony fish, and sharks and rays; 2 to protect turtles; and 4 to protect marine mammals. OSPAR has also implemented 16 measures to protect threatened habitats, from muddy shores exposed at low tide, to complex and fragile habitats in the abyss of the deep sea.

OSPAR has now agreed to extend protection to kelp forests, habitats created in muddy sediments by tube-dwelling Haploids crustaceans, the Azorean barnacle endemic to Macaronesia and the rare houting fish.

How will this benefit the North-East Atlantic?

Taking priority action to protect threatened and declining species and habitats will create a healthy and resilient ocean. Protecting wide-ranging habitats such as kelp forests, will help to ensure that the ocean's capacity for blue carbon capture remains intact. Protecting rare species that only occur in the North-East Atlantic will help to ensure that the global biodiversity crisis is halted.



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For more information on OSPAR's work to protect the species and habitats of the North-East Atlantic, please visit the [OSPAR website](http://www.ospar.org)



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