

From: Tessa Marshall – Wales Environment Link
Sent: 27 November 2025 13:11
To: Gruffydd, Llyr (Aelod o'r Senedd | Member of the Senedd)
Subject: Letter sent to DFM re adequate resourcing to marine biodiversity

Dear Llyr Gruffydd MS, Chair of the CCEI Committee,

I'm writing to let you know the WEL Marine working group has recently written to the Welsh Government regarding the inadequate resourcing of marine biodiversity. The letter is attached herewith.

We have become concerned regarding the resourcing of marine biodiversity, as staffing increases appear to be made in regards to renewable energy and offshore wind; without equivalent increases for marine biodiversity teams. This could further place marine biodiversity at risk.

We are hoping to secure some more detailed information regarding staffing in these areas from the DFM. Do let us know if you have any information or pointers regarding this matter. We hope to secure commitments to increase resourcing and enable proper care for the marine environment in the coming months and years.

As you may be aware, the WEL manifesto also includes detailed asks to restore our oceans in the next Welsh Government, and resourcing will be key to delivering against these.

Many thanks in advance,

Tessa

Tessa Marshall (hi/ei) / (she/her)
Swyddog Polisi / Policy Officer
Cyswllt Amgylchedd Cymru / Wales Environment Link

Huw Irranca-Davies MS,
Deputy First Minister of Wales,
Via email

27th November | 2025

Adequate Resourcing for the Marine Environment

Dear Deputy First Minister,

As you know, our marine environment is in a critical state. 1 in 6 species in Wales are at risk of extinction – including a significant number of marine species. In June, Natural Resources Wales [published](#) new condition assessments for a total of 85 features designated across 17 marine special areas of conservation (SACs) and special protected areas (SPAs). Of these 32 features were in favourable condition (38%), 47 were in unfavourable condition (55%) and 6 were in unknown condition (7%). We commend the significant amount of work that went into the production of these assessments, which could be incredibly useful for improving marine management going forward.

However, it appears better resourcing is needed to deliver improvements in marine environmental management. The updated condition assessments – although helpful - did not account for all Marine Protected Areas in Wales. It was furthermore disappointing to see the recent [Species at Risk](#) report by NRW did not include any consideration of marine species, further indicating that marine biodiversity is not being appropriately resourced.

Marine biodiversity underpins ocean resilience, supports our coastal communities, and sustains our economy. However, pressures upon the marine environment are only increasing. The Marine Conservation Society's Beachwatch data highlighted a 4% increase in marine litter in Wales last year, and we saw sewage discharges at an average of more than one every five minutes. We are also increasingly concerned that the [ambitions for renewable development](#) in the Celtic Seas will add increasing pressure upon the MPA network in Wales and is already adding additional resource

and capacity constraints upon the Marine Biodiversity and Ecosystems Team and the Marine Planning Team.

Indeed, the Welsh Government commissioned [Independent review of marine planning approaches in Wales](#) (2025) identified the following as a “threat”: “public sector resourcing and budget in Wales are constrained”. Similar concerns were also raised in a [report](#) on marine planning in Wales undertaken by Howell Marine Consulting. Furthermore, marine biodiversity is facing additional challenges from the impact of fisheries in the offshore zone, where bottom trawling is occurring and impacting Welsh inshore fisheries and biodiversity across our seas. Given the scale of the challenge, we are sure you would agree adequate staffing in nature recovery and biodiversity – in NRW and the Welsh Government - is essential.

The Future Generations Report 2025 outlined, ‘[nature recovery is currently the best way for Wales to sequester more carbon and increase resilience to climate change effects](#)’. Yet, there appears to be a considerable imbalance between the capacity of those teams in the Welsh Government working in marine biodiversity and marine planning, and those working in energy and terrestrial planning and biodiversity. Adequate resourcing is not only an environmental necessity but also key to protecting the well-being of future generations.

Therefore, we would like to request you share information pertaining to the resourcing of the Marine Biodiversity and Ecosystems Team, and the Marine Planning Team, how this compares to the resourcing of the renewable energy teams, and any assessments of the effectiveness of the work programme regarding marine biodiversity over the sixth Senedd. We would also welcome the opportunity to see any plans to increase capacity to ensure marine biodiversity is adequately protected and restored while marine development is enabled.

Further, we ask that you would meet with us to discuss these concerns further, so we can hear more about the Welsh Governments ambitions to protect crucial marine biodiversity for future generations.

Cofion gorau,

Jacques Villemot and James Hitchcock

Co-Chairs

Wales Environment Link Marine Working Group

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