# WRITTEN STATEMENT

# BY

# THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

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| **TITLE** | **Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 - Report to the National Assembly for Wales on Marine Protected Areas in Wales** |
| **DATE** | **21 January 2019** |
| **BY** | **Lesley Griffiths AM, Minister for Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs** |

Today I have laid before the National Assembly for Wales the Welsh Government’s latest report required under Section 124 of the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 (Marine Act)[[1]](#footnote-1). The report covers the period between January 2014 and December 2018 and sets out the significant progress made by the Welsh Government in contributing to a well managed network of marine protected areas (MPAs) across the UK.

The Report highlights how the MPA network in Wales has been strengthened during this period with the designation of ten new MPAs and the results of an assessment on the Welsh network which concluded Welsh MPAs are making a significant contribution towards a wider ecologically coherent network of MPAs[[2]](#footnote-2).

The achievements in MPA management during the reporting period are also set out in the Report. This includes the considerable work carried out by the MPA Management Steering Group to ensure the network is, and continues to be, effectively managed and the recently published MPA Network Management Framework, which provides the structure for managing and improving the condition of the MPA network as a whole.

I have previously stated my commitment to the Welsh Government fulfilling its national and international obligations to protect marine biodiversity and ecosystems. The report also details the work already underway to enhance the coherence and condition of the network during the next reporting period, this work includes using new powers for nature conservation in the Welsh offshore and the designation of Marine Conservation Zones.

I want to ensure the MPA network in Wales is making the best possible contribution it can towards the resilience, health and improvement of our seas to support the sustainable use of our seas now and for future generations.

1. <http://www.assembly.wales/en/bus-home/Pages/Document-Library.aspx> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. <http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/pdf/JNCC_NetworkProgressWelshWaters_Final.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)