

# Case Study

# Northwestern North Sea Sandeel Fishery Closure

**Understanding OECMs to achieve the 30 by 30 target**  
Brussels, 29 September 2023

Eskild Kirkegaard  
IUCN-CEM-Fisheries Expert Group

# ICES/IUCN-CEM FEG WORKSHOP ON TESTING OECM PRACTICES AND STRATEGIES (WKTOPS)

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# Sandeel



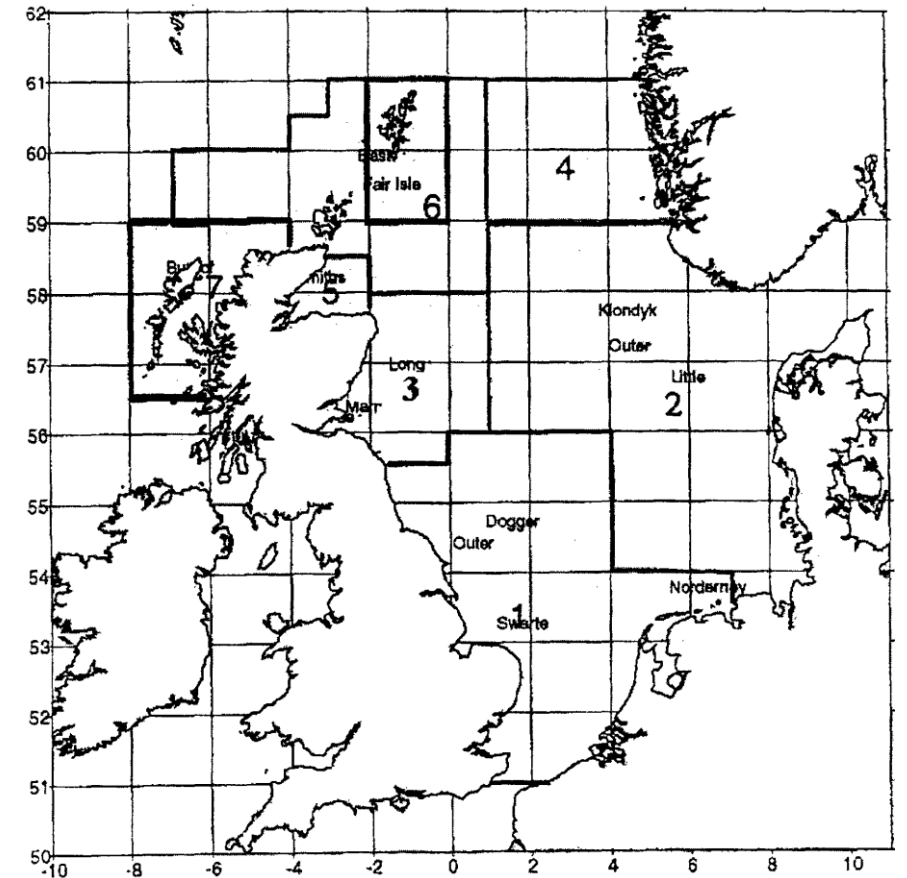
**During the early 1990s sandeel fishery developed off the Firth of Forth, east of Scotland.**

**The landings from this fishery peaked at over 100,000 t in 1993.**

**The Firth of Forth area is important for breeding seabirds and the large landings of sandeels coincided with declines in the breeding success of some seabirds.**

## ICES in 1999 recommended:

that the sandeel fishery west of 1°W in Area 3 (Wee bankie and Long) be functionally closed, because the recent breeding success of kittiwakes has been less than 0.5 fledged chicks per well-built nest (WP - SGESF), which is the recommended threshold for closure. Such a closure should stay in force until kittiwake breeding success exceeds 0.7 fledged chicks per wellbuilt nest.

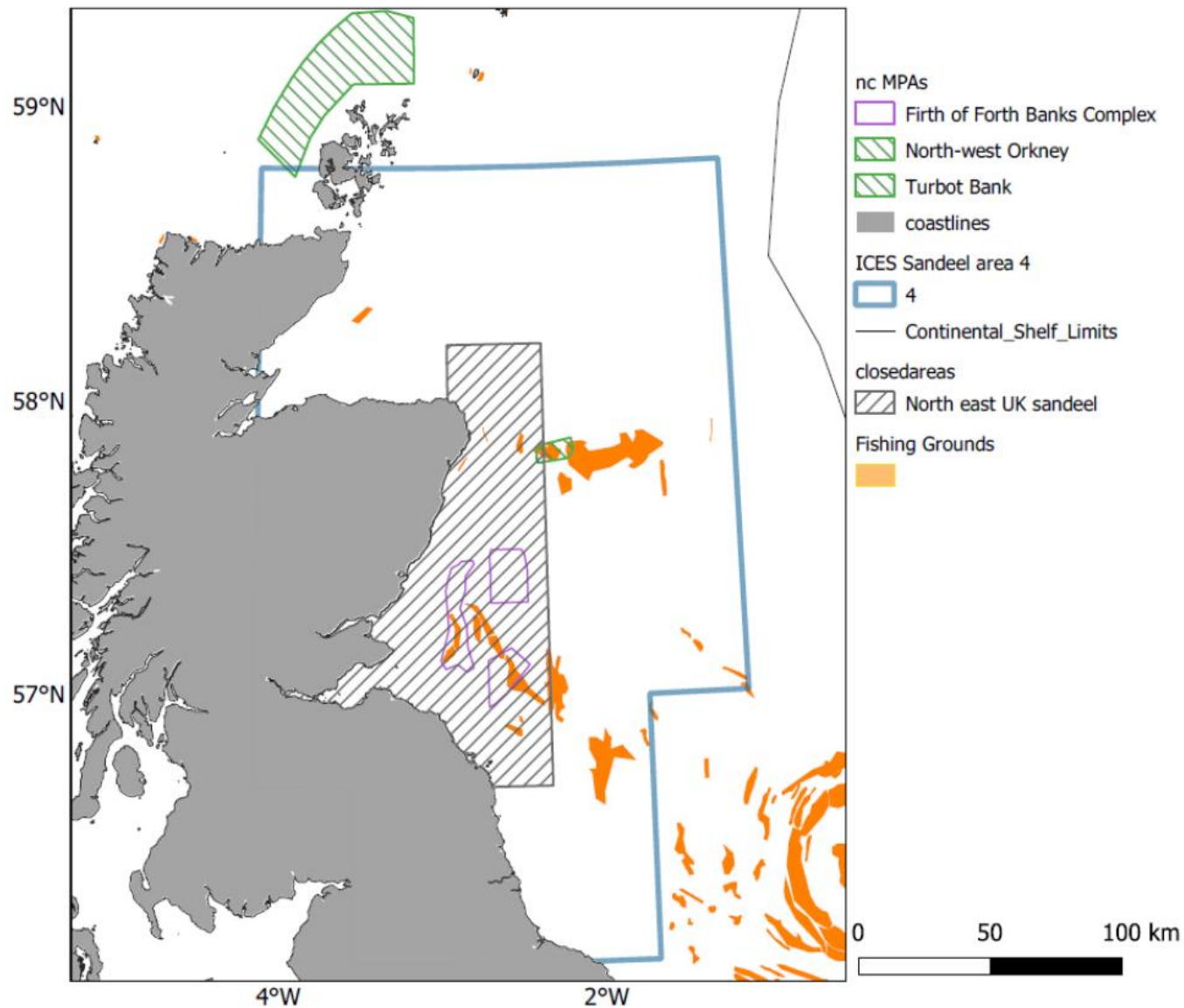


**A precautionary closure of the area was agreed by EC and entered into force in 2000 as a technical measures for the protection of juveniles of marine organisms, although the primary purpose of the closure was intended to benefit seabirds.**

**Following the exit of the UK from the European Union in 2021 the closure has been retained under UK legislation.**

**The closure was reviewed in 2001, 2002 and 2007 and it was concluded that the closure had decreased the mortality of age 1+ sandeels.**

**It was not possible to show a clear link between sandeel abundance and kittiwake breeding success.**



**Chart showing the closed area. Nature conservation MPAs for sandeels also shown and fishing grounds from Jensen *et al.* (2011).**

## **OECM?**

**Criteria A: Not a protected area**

**Criteria B: The area is governed and managed**

**Criteria C: Achieves sustained and effective contribution to in situ conservation of biodiversity**

**Criteria D. Associated ecosystem functions and services and cultural, spiritual, socio-economic and other locally relevant values**