

National Parks and Wildlife Service

Conservation Objectives Series

Belgica Mound Province SAC 002327



NPWS

An tSeirbhís Páirceanna
Náisiúnta agus Fiadhúlra
National Parks and Wildlife
Service

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Introduction

The overall aim of the Habitats Directive is to maintain or restore the favourable conservation status of habitats and species of community interest. These habitats and species are listed in the Habitats and Birds Directives and Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas are designated to afford protection to the most vulnerable of them. These two designations are collectively known as the Natura 2000 network.

European and national legislation places a collective obligation on Ireland and its citizens to maintain habitats and species in the Natura 2000 network at favourable conservation condition. The Government and its agencies are responsible for the implementation and enforcement of regulations that will ensure the ecological integrity of these sites.

A site-specific conservation objective aims to define favourable conservation condition for a particular habitat or species at that site.

The maintenance of habitats and species within Natura 2000 sites at favourable conservation condition will contribute to the overall maintenance of favourable conservation status of those habitats and species at a national level.

Favourable conservation status of a habitat is achieved when:

- its natural range, and area it covers within that range, are stable or increasing, and
- the specific structure and functions which are necessary for its long-term maintenance exist and are likely to continue to exist for the foreseeable future, and
- the conservation status of its typical species is favourable.

The favourable conservation status of a species is achieved when:

- population dynamics data on the species concerned indicate that it is maintaining itself on a long-term basis as a viable component of its natural habitats, and
- the natural range of the species is neither being reduced nor is likely to be reduced for the foreseeable future, and
- there is, and will probably continue to be, a sufficiently large habitat to maintain its populations on a long-term basis.

Notes/Guidelines:

1. The targets given in these conservation objectives are based on best available information at the time of writing. As more information becomes available, targets for attributes may change. These will be updated periodically, as necessary.
2. An appropriate assessment based on these conservation objectives will remain valid even if the targets are subsequently updated, providing they were the most recent objectives available when the assessment was carried out. It is essential that the date and version are included when objectives are cited.
3. Assessments cannot consider an attribute in isolation from the others listed for that habitat or species, or for other habitats and species listed for that site. A plan or project with an apparently small impact on one attribute may have a significant impact on another.
4. Please note that the maps included in this document do not necessarily show the entire extent of the habitats and species for which the site is listed. This should be borne in mind when appropriate assessments are being carried out.
5. When using these objectives, it is essential that the relevant backing/supporting documents are consulted, particularly where instructed in the targets or notes for a particular attribute.

Qualifying Interests

* indicates a priority habitat under the Habitats Directive

002327	Belgica Mound Province SAC
1170	Reefs
1349	Common Bottlenose Dolphin <i>Tursiops truncatus</i>
1351	Harbour Porpoise <i>Phocoena phocoena</i>

IMPORTANT: This 'Version 2' document includes 2 additional QIs (1349/1351). The conservation objectives for pre-existing QIs have generally not been updated.

Supporting documents, relevant reports & publications

Supporting documents, NPWS reports and publications are available for download from: www.npws.ie/Publications

NPWS Documents

Year :	2022
Title :	Belgica Mound Province SAC (site code: 002327) Conservation objectives supporting document - marine habitats V1
Author :	NPWS
Series :	Conservation objectives supporting document
Year :	2024
Title :	Reef Habitat in Irish offshore waters – A synthesis of current knowledge
Author :	Forde, J., Alcock, L. & Grehan, A.
Series :	Irish Wildlife Manuals No. 152
Year :	2024
Title :	Belgica Mound Province SAC (site code 002327). Conservation objectives supporting document - Bottlenose Dolphin and Harbour Porpoise V1
Author :	NPWS
Series :	Conservation objectives supporting document

Other References

Year :	2002
Title :	Report of the survey in zone 3 of the Irish National Seabed Survey, volume 1: Describing the results and the methods used
Author :	Geological Survey of Ireland (GSI)
Series :	GOTECH, Dublin
Year :	2008
Title :	Growth history of a cold-water coral covered carbonate mound- Galway Mound, Porcupine Seabight, NE-Atlantic
Author :	Eisele, M.H.; Hebbeln, D.; Wienberg, C.
Series :	Marine Geology, 253(3-4): 160-169
Year :	2010
Title :	Atlas of the deep-water seabed: Ireland
Author :	Dorschel, B.; Wheeler, A.J.; Monteys, X.; Verbruggen, K.
Series :	Springer, Netherlands
Year :	2011
Title :	The importance of the terrigenous fraction within a cold-water coral mound: A case study
Author :	Pirlet, H.; Christophe C.; Thierens, M.; Latruwe, K.; Van Rooij, D.; Foubert, A.; Norbert, F.; Blamart, D.; Huvenne, V.; Swennen, R.; Vanhaecke, F.; Henriët, J.P.
Series :	Marine Geology, 282(1-2): 13-25
Year :	2013
Title :	High-resolution habitat suitability modelling can improve conservation of vulnerable marine ecosystems in the deep sea
Author :	Rengstorf, A.M.; Yesson, C.; Brown, C.; Grehan, A.J.
Series :	Journal of Biogeography, 40: 1702-1714
Year :	2019
Title :	SEAROVER 2018 Deep Water Reef Habitat & Species Video Analysis Full Report
Author :	La Bianca, G.; Ross, R.; Howell, K.
Series :	Report commissioned by Marine Institute, Rinville, Oranmore, Co. Galway

Spatial data sources

Year : 2010
Title : INFOMAR dataset
GIS Operations : Bathymetric dataset used to derive spatial footprint of reef features; clipped to SAC boundary. Expert opinion used as necessary to resolve any issues arising
Used For : 1170, Marine community types (maps 2, 3)

Year : 2002
Title : Irish National Seabed Survey
GIS Operations : Bathymetric dataset used to derive spatial footprint of reef features; clipped to SAC boundary. Expert opinion used as necessary to resolve any issues arising
Used For : 1170, Marine community types (maps 2, 3)

1170 Reefs

To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Reefs in Belgica Mound Province SAC, which is defined by the following list of attributes and targets:

Attribute	Measure	Target	Notes
Area of geological features	Hectares	The permanent area is stable or increasing, subject to natural processes. See map 2	Habitat area estimated as 3,011ha, with an additional 13km of linear features, based on information from the national seabed mapping programme INFOMAR (Dorschel et al., 2010) and the Irish National Seabed Survey (GSI, 2002). See the Belgica Mound Province SAC conservation objectives supporting document for marine habitats for further details
Distribution	Occurrence	The distribution of reefs is stable or increasing, subject to natural processes. See map 3	Based on information from the national seabed mapping programme INFOMAR (Dorschel et al., 2010) and the Irish National Seabed Survey (GSI, 2002). Map 3 shows the mapped geological features, which are used as indicators of the distribution of the reefs habitat. See the marine habitats supporting document for further details
Physical structure: habitat-forming species	Presence and structure	Maintain the structural integrity of the Belgica Mound Province reef community complex, subject to natural processes	Based on information from Eisele et al. (2008), Pirllet et al. (2011), Rengstorf et al. (2013), La Bianca et al. (2019) and Forde et al. (2024). See the marine habitats supporting document for further details
Community structure	Biological composition	Conserve the Belgica Mound Province reef community complex in a natural condition, subject to natural processes	Based on information from Eisele et al. (2008), Pirllet et al. (2011), Rengstorf et al. (2013), La Bianca et al. (2019) and Forde et al. (2024). See the marine habitats supporting document for further details

Conservation Objectives for : Belgica Mound Province SAC [002327]

1349 Common Bottlenose Dolphin *Tursiops truncatus*

To maintain the Favourable conservation condition of Bottlenose Dolphin (*Tursiops truncatus*) in Belgica Mound Province SAC, which is defined by the following list of attributes and targets:

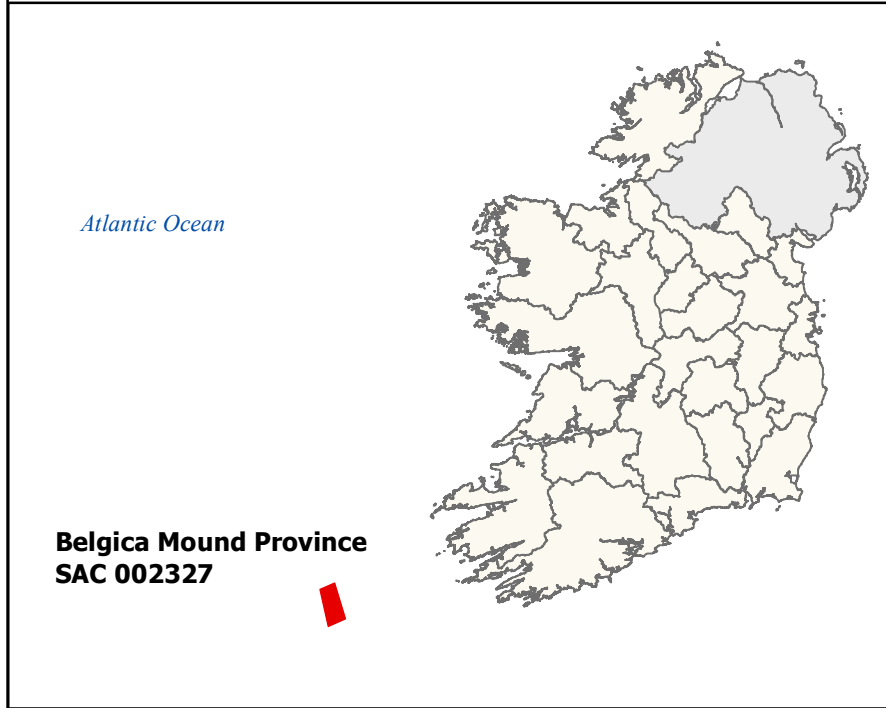
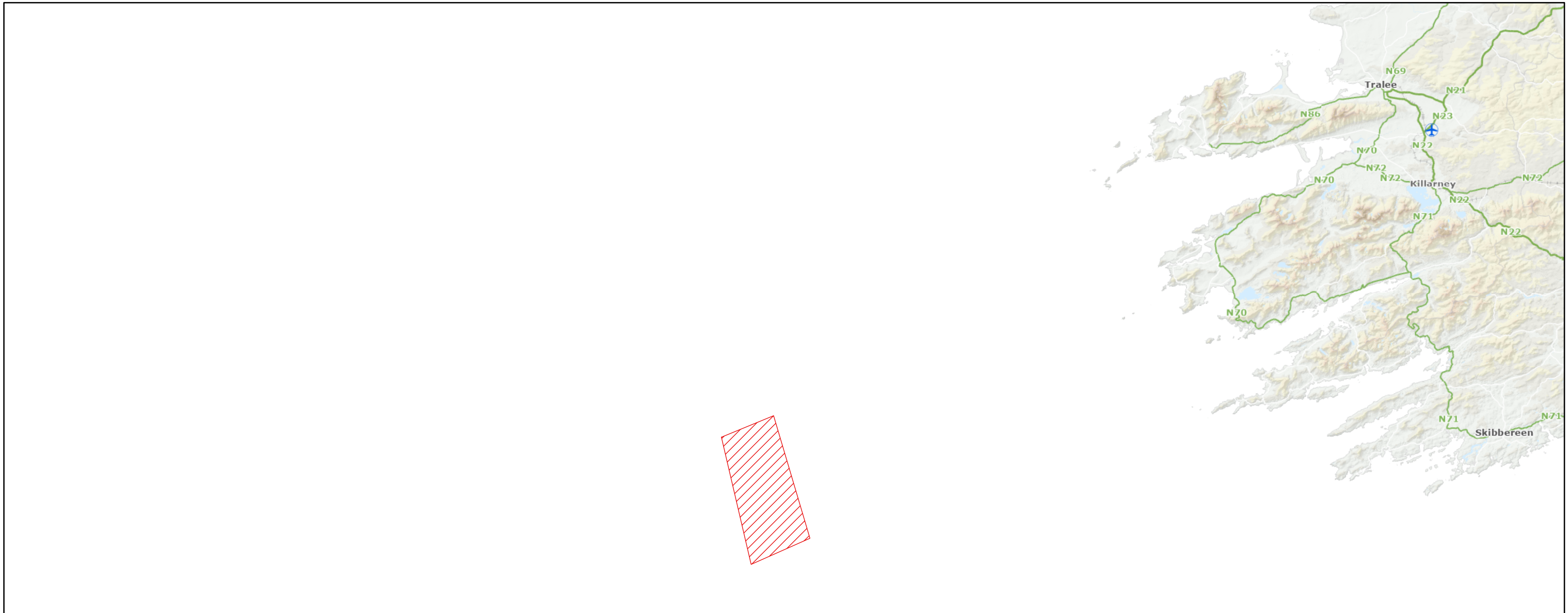
Attribute	Measure	Target	Notes
Access to suitable habitat	Number of artificial barriers	Species range within the site should not be restricted by artificial barriers to site use. See map 1	See the Belgica Mound Province SAC conservation objectives supporting document - Bottlenose Dolphin and Harbour Porpoise for further details (NPWS, 2024)
Disturbance	Level of impact	Human activities should occur at levels that do not adversely affect the Bottlenose Dolphin population at the site	See the Belgica Mound Province SAC conservation objectives supporting document - Bottlenose Dolphin and Harbour Porpoise for further details (NPWS, 2024)

Conservation Objectives for : Belgica Mound Province SAC [002327]


1351 Harbour Porpoise *Phocoena phocoena*

To maintain the Favourable conservation condition of Harbour Porpoise (*Phocoena phocoena*) in Belgica Mound Province SAC, which is defined by the following list of attributes and targets:

Attribute	Measure	Target	Notes
Access to suitable habitat	Number of artificial barriers	Species range within the site should not be restricted by artificial barriers to site use. See map 1	See the Belgica Mound Province SAC conservation objectives supporting document - Bottlenose Dolphin and Harbour Porpoise for further details (NPWS, 2024)
Disturbance	Level of impact	Human activities should occur at levels that do not adversely affect the Harbour Porpoise community at the site	See the Belgica Mound Province SAC conservation objectives supporting document - Bottlenose Dolphin and Harbour Porpoise for further details (NPWS, 2024)



Legend

 Belgica Mound Province SAC 002327




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**MAP 1:
BELGICA MOUND PROVINCE SAC
CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES
SAC DESIGNATION**

Map to be read in conjunction with the NPWS Conservation Objectives Document

**SITE CODE:
SAC 002327; version 1**

0 5 10 20 Kilometres

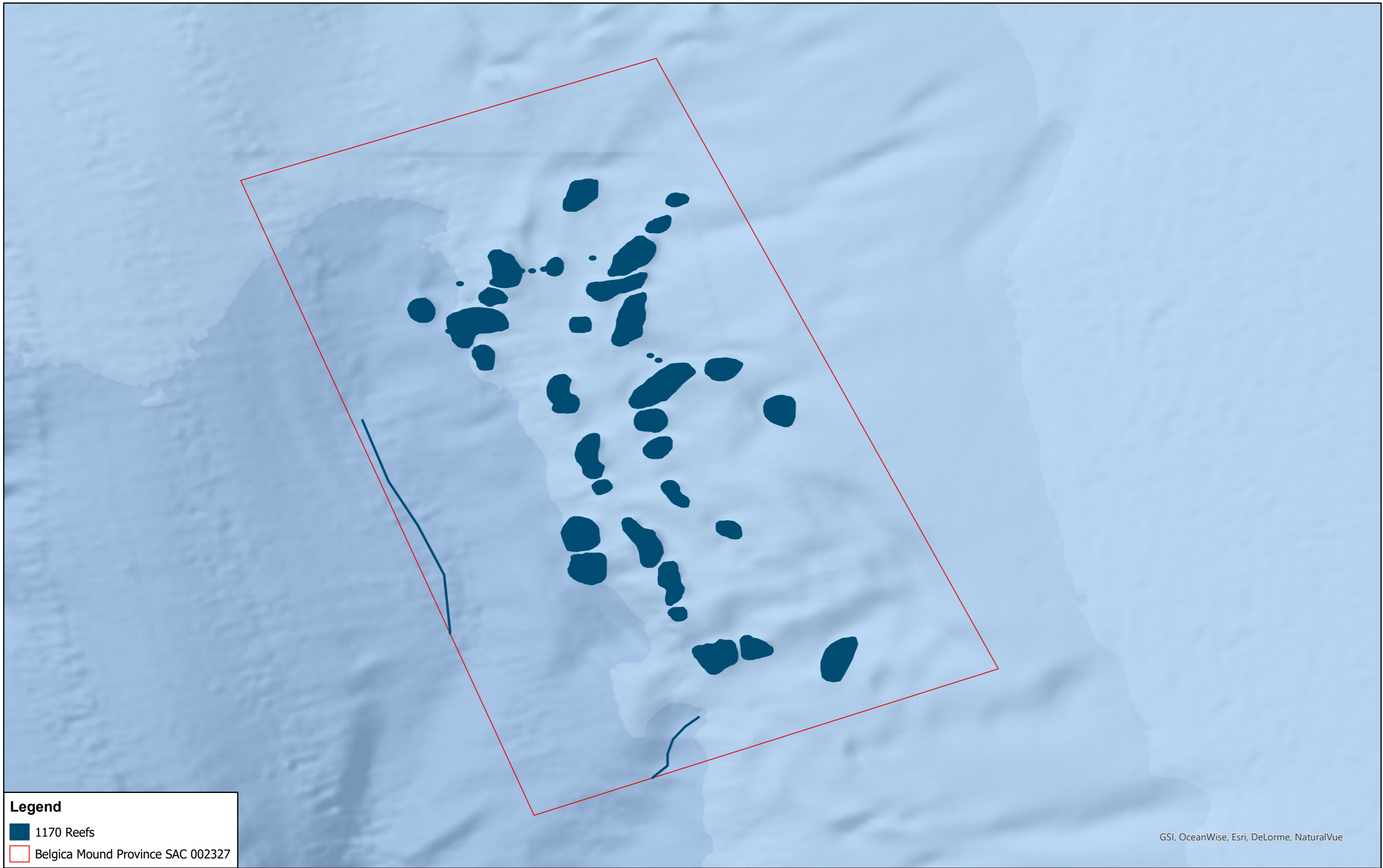


The mapped boundaries are of an indicative and general nature only. Boundaries of designated areas are subject to revision.
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**Map version 2
Date: November 2024**



Legend

- 1170 Reefs
- Belgica Mound Province SAC 002327

GSI, OceanWise, Esri, DeLorme, NaturalVue

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Local Government and Heritage

**MAP 2:
BELGICA MOUND PROVINCE SAC
CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES
REEF**

Map to be read in conjunction with the NPWS Conservation Objectives Document.

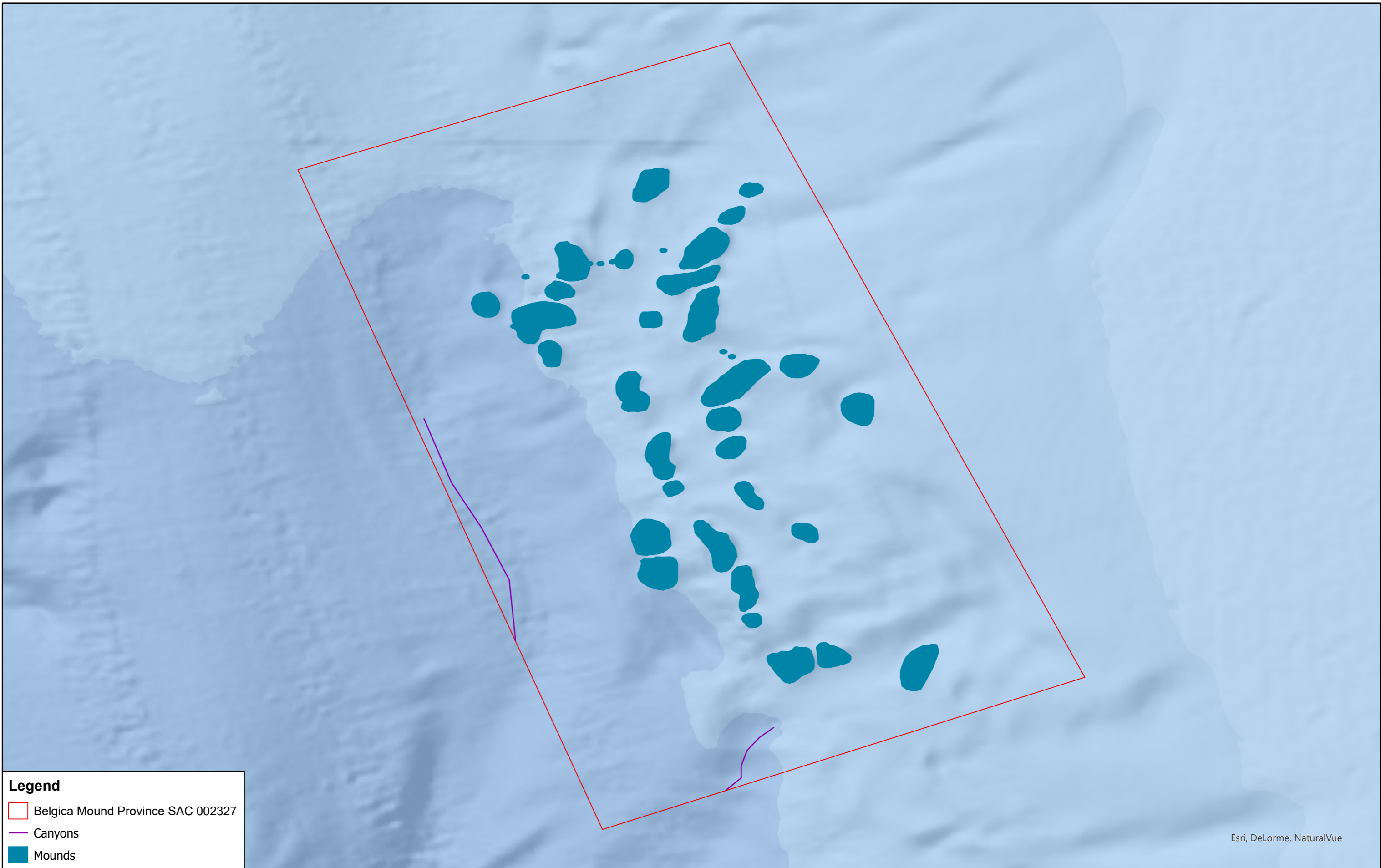
**SITE CODE:
SAC 002327; version 1.0**

0 2 4 6 8 Kilometers

The mapped boundaries are of an indicative and general nature only. Boundaries of designated areas are subject to revision.
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**Map Version 1
Date: Dec 2021**



Legend

- Belgica Mound Province SAC 002327
- Canyons
- Mounds

Esri, DeLorme, NaturalVue




An Roinn Tithíochta,
Rialtais Áitiúil agus Oidhreachta
Department of Housing,
Local Government and Heritage

**MAP 3:
BELGICA MOUND PROVINCE SAC
CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES
MARINE COMMUNITY TYPES**

Map to be read in conjunction with the NPWS Conservation Objectives Document.

**SITE CODE:
SAC 002327; version 1.0**

0 2 4 6 8 Kilometers



The mapped boundaries are of an indicative and general nature only. Boundaries of designated areas are subject to revision.
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**Map Version 1
Date: Dec 2021**