

**MarPAMM: Developing benthic species distribution models for the INTERREG VA region**

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**Abstract**

The MarPAMM (Marine Protected Areas Management and Monitoring) project supported by the European Union's INTERREG VA Programme, managed by the Special EU Programmes Body will deliver four new models to support the conservation of habitats and species that underpin Marine Protected Area (MPA) designations within the cross-border regions of the West of Scotland, Northern Ireland the border counties of the Republic of Ireland. The objective are to form coherent and cross-disciplinary models to support the conservation of marine habitats and species by producing six marine management plans, applying a novel regional approach. These will be based on stakeholder engagement and sound scientific evidence provided by the four new models developed by MarPAMM, and existing data and models produced by sister INTERREG VA projects. One of the models which MarPAMM aims to produce will incorporate a range of benthic species identified as priority marine features by stakeholders and policy leaders from the three jurisdictions within the INTERREG VA region. Specifically, the project will examine the distribution and connectivity of key habitats and species of conservation value to support a well-managed network of MPAs across the region, including flapper skate (*Dipturus intermedius*), ocean quahog (*Arctica islandica*), horse mussel (*Modiolus modiolus*), sea pens (*Virgularia mirabilis*, *Pennatulula phosphorea*, *Funiculina quadrangularis*), sea fans complex (*Swiftia pallida* & *Eunicella verrucosa*) and maerl (*Phymatolithon calcareum* & *Lithothamnion glaciale*).

**Keywords:**

MPA, species, habitat, predictive models, regional, distribution

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