

Northeast Atlantic countries create new protected sea area

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The governments of 15 countries in the Northeast Atlantic on Friday created a new protected area of the ocean they say is bigger than the combined land mass of Germany and the United Kingdom.

The countries designated a marine protected area for seabirds covering nearly 600,000 square kilometers (about 230,000 square miles) as part of

their efforts to ensure the conservation and sustainability of marine biodiversity.

The protected zone area is viewed as crucial for the feeding and breeding of local and migrating seabirds.

Government representatives also gave their blessing at a meeting in Portugal to a new North-East Atlantic Environment Strategy, which features commitments to reduce the [impact of climate change](#) and [ocean acidification](#), [biodiversity loss](#), and pollution, including [marine plastic pollution](#).

The plan includes a target to reduce trash in the sea by 50% by 2025, and by 75% by 2030.

The 15 countries belong to the so-called OSPAR Convention. They are Germany, Belgium, Denmark, Spain, Finland, France, Ireland, Iceland, Luxembourg, Norway, the Netherlands, Portugal, the United Kingdom, Sweden and Switzerland. The European Union is also a member.

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