Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

Bembridge

Recommended Marine Conservation Zone

June 2018

Consultation on Sites Proposed for Designation in the Third Tranche of Marine Conservation Zones

Sun star and bryozoans on subtidal coarse sediment © Crown Copyright

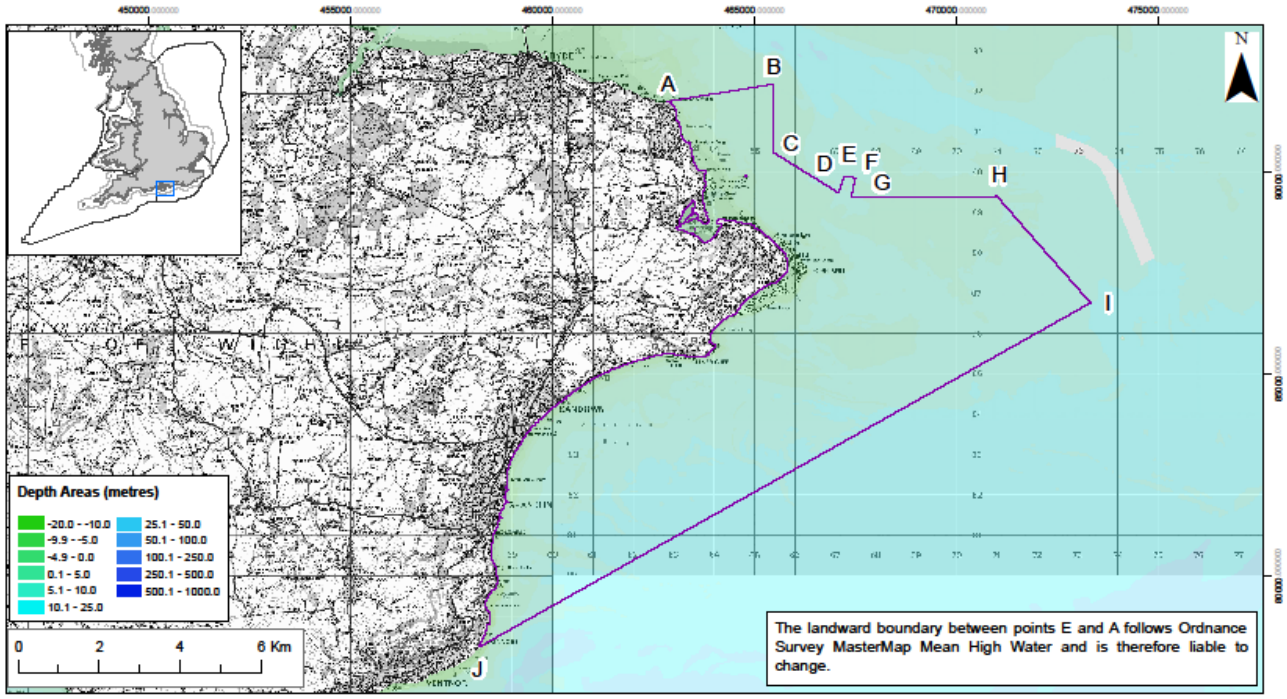
Contents

Where is the site located?

Bembridge recommended Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ) is an inshore site that covers an area of approximately 75 km². The site lies adjacent to the east coast of the Isle of Wight from Nettlestone Point in the north to Ventnor in the south. The site encompasses the intertidal and subtidal areas extending to the edge of the deep water channel approach into the Eastern Solent.

The site overlaps with the South Wight Maritime Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and will offer protection to species and features not currently protected by the SAC.

The site boundaries have been modified from those proposed by the Regional MCZ Project. The new boundary excludes the St Helen's Road Anchorage after consultation with stakeholders.



Bembridge rMCZ Version 2 Boundary

- Recommended MCZ Version 2
- Regional MCZ project area
- rMCZ boundary co-ordinates
- 12nM Territorial Seas Limit
- Land

Point	Lat	Long	Point	Lat	Long
A	50° 43' 18.961" N	1° 6' 41.049" W	F	50° 42' 15.920" N	1° 2' 43.904" W
B	50° 43' 31.737" N	1° 4' 26.414" W	G	50° 42' 0.054" N	1° 2' 49.824" W
C	50° 42' 37.267" N	1° 4' 26.875" W	H	50° 41' 59.658" N	0° 59' 45.652" W
D	50° 42' 3.816" N	1° 3' 5.116" W	I	50° 40' 33.307" N	0° 57' 48.871" W
E	50° 42' 17.100" N	1° 2' 57.651" W	J	50° 36' 3.142" N	1° 10' 45.619" W

Why is the site environmentally important?

The area within Bembridge MCZ is highly diverse with a wide range of habitats and species, from rocky shores and intertidal sediments to deep water habitats, sea pens and burrowing megafauna, making it an ecologically important site. Several species, including the peacock's tail seaweed, are at the most eastern edge of their distribution and are considered to seed other populations around the Isle of Wight.

Subtidal coarse sediment © Crown Copyright

The central area of the site is dominated by an extensive area of limestone and chalk bedrock providing a complex system of crevices, tunnels and pools supporting very diverse algae and invertebrate species such as crustaceans and molluscs.

The large areas of subtidal mixed sediments act as a supporting substrate to several important features such as maerl beds. Maerl is a fragile, calcareous, red seaweed that forms large mats and provides shelter for many other species. It is highly sensitive to seabed activities and takes a long time to recover from damage.

The site would also protect the short-snouted seahorse (*Hippocampus hippocampus*) as well as two species of stalked jellyfish (*Lucernariopsis campanulata* and *Haliclystus* species).

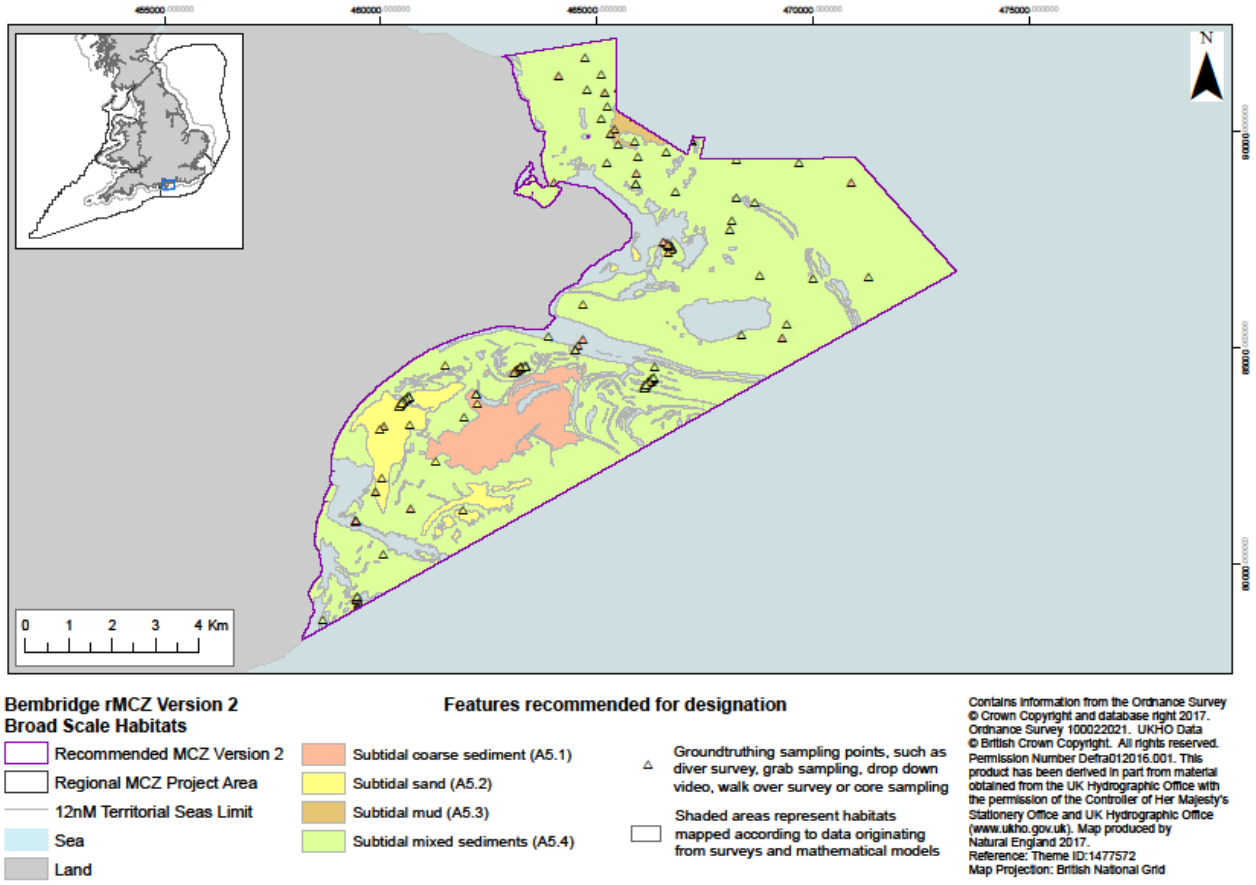
What would this site protect?

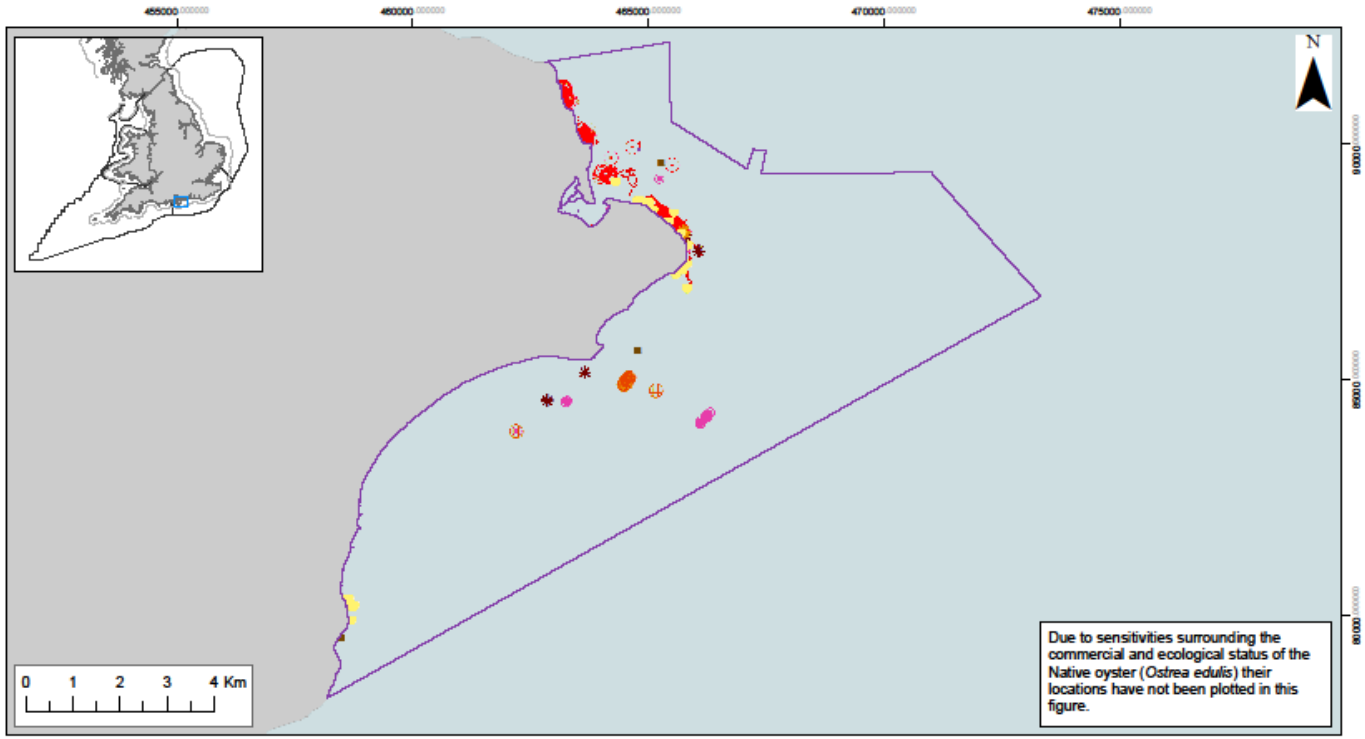
Designation would protect the following features. You can read more about the features this site protects and why they are important here.

Feature	General Management Approach
Sheltered muddy gravels	Maintain in favourable condition
Short-snouted seahorse (*Hippocampus hippocampus*)	
Stalked jellyfish (*Haliclystus* species)	
Stalked jellyfish (*Lucernariopsis campanulata*)	
Subtidal coarse sediment	
Subtidal sand	
Native oyster (*Ostrea edulis*)	Recover to favourable condition
Seagrass beds	
Maerl beds	
Sea pens and burrowing megafauna	
Peacock's tail (*Padina pavonica*)	
Subtidal mixed sediments	
Subtidal mud	

Where are the features located?

The following maps show the location of the features to be protected within the site. A range of different types of surveys have been used to create these maps. More detailed information on the techniques used can be found here.





Bembridge rMCZ Version 2
Features of Conservation Importance

- Recommended MCZ Version 2
- Regional MCZ Project Area
- 12nM Territorial Seas Limit
- Sea
- Land

Features recommended for designation

- Stalked jellyfish (*Haliclystus* spp)
- Short snouted seahorse (*Hippocampus hippocampus*)
- Stalked jellyfish (*Lucernariopsis campanulata*)
- Peacock's tail (*Padina pavonica*)
- Maerl beds
- Seagrass beds
- Sheltered muddy gravels
- Seagrass beds
- Sheltered muddy gravels

Reference: Theme ID:1477572
Map Projection: British National Grid

Which activities are likely to be affected?

Management decisions are taken on a case by case basis by relevant regulators. If an activity is identified as requiring management this does not necessarily mean that it will need to be significantly restricted. Decisions will be based on the specifics of each case and any restrictions will depend on the sensitivity of the species, habitats or geological/geomorphological features to be protected to the activity taking place. More detail is available in the Impact Assessment.

Sectors and activities likely to be affected by designation		
Sector	**Activity Affected**	**Best Cost Estimate (£) per year**
Commercial Fishing UK	Bottom trawling, dredging and the use of pots, nets, lines & traps	£5,000
Ports and Harbours	Environmental Impact Assessments	£4,000
Recreation	Anchoring and mooring	£500
Renewable energy - tidal	Environmental Impact Assessments	£1,000
Best estimate total cost		**£10,500**

Commercial Fishing UK

The following gears are known to be used within the site:

- Bottom trawls, dredges and mid-water trawls
- Pots, nets, hand lines and traps

Locally the most important fisheries within the site are potting, with crab, lobster and whelk being important to the local economy. Potting is regarded as one of the least damaging forms of fishing and any management of this activity within the MCZ is likely to be restricted to particular zones. Netting also occurs within the site with the main target species being bream and skate.

The use of mobile trawling gear is already prohibited across much of the site through a bylaw protecting the overlapping SAC. The activities likely to be affected by designation are shown in the table above.

Ports and harbours

The site borders the deep water channel approach into the Eastern Solent leading to the ports of Southampton and Portsmouth. Navigational dredging occurs within 5 km of the site and a disposal site (WI071) also lies within this distance. All future applications will need to consider the possible effects of the activities on the features designated and are likely to incur additional costs as part of the Environmental Impact Assessment.

Recreation

The majority of recreational activities within Bembridge MCZ are likely to be unaffected as they do not overlap with potentially sensitive features. The estimated costs are for the closure (voluntary or legislated) to anchoring over seagrass along the western edge of Priory Bay and over the maerl beds on Culver Spit, which is likely to affect boaters, divers and sea angling. The re-siting of a small number of moorings within Priory Bay would also be required.

The placement of temporary and permanent race marks within the MCZ is unlikely to be affected as current evidence suggests these do not overlap with potentially sensitive features and the degree of exposure is sufficiently small that the activity does not represent a risk to the feature.

Renewable energy - tidal

The site overlaps the East of Isle of Wight Area of potential for tidal energy. Future developments relating to the placement of a tidal energy scheme that overlap with or are within 1 km of an MCZ will incur an additional environmental assessment cost.

Which activities are not likely to be affected?

These activities are known to take place within or adjacent to this site but at their current levels of intensity the best available evidence indicates they are not likely to be damaging the features to be protected:

- Aggregate extraction
- Beach management
- Cables – power and telecommunication cables currently intersect the site
- Coastal development and flood and erosion risk management schemes

- Coastal infrastructure
- Commercial fishing - mid-water trawls

Additional information

To read the advice provided by Natural England, please visit

http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/6079955233931264

To read the advice provided by the Joint Nature Conservation Committee, please visit

http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-7119

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