

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

Camel Estuary

Recommended Marine Conservation Zone

June 2018

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



The Camel Estuary © Liz Bailey

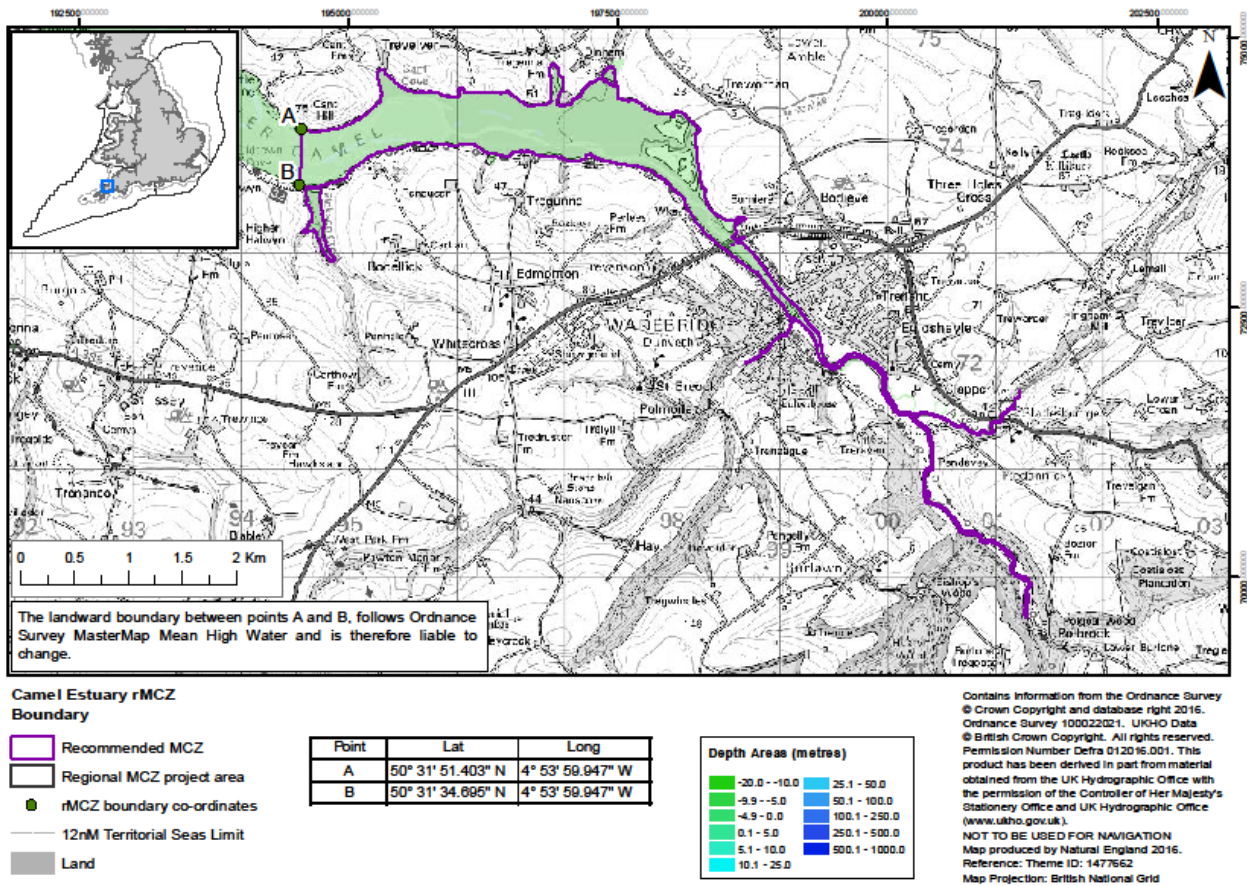
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Where is the site located?

The Camel Estuary recommended Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ) is an inshore site that covers an area of approximately 2 km². The site covers the upper reaches of the Camel estuary adjacent to the town of Wadebridge, on the north coast of Cornwall.

The boundary of the Camel Estuary MCZ has been modified slightly from the Regional MCZ Project recommendation. The original boundary, which followed the mean high water line, has been extended to include the adjacent coastal saltmarshes and saline reedbeds.



Why is the site environmentally important?

The Camel Estuary is the largest and most sheltered marine inlet on the north Cornwall coast. This site and other estuaries form important areas for productivity and have an essential function as nursery areas for juvenile fish.

Within the site, intertidal coarse sediment plays an important role in beach protection and provides feeding sites for wading birds at the high water mark. It also attracts fish, which

scavenge within the habitat providing a beneficial ecosystem service to both commercial and recreational fisheries.



Camel Estuary reedbeds © Liz Bailey

The areas of low energy intertidal rock along the southern banks of the estuary provide a habitat for a range of seaweed species and grazers and support the estuarine rocky habitats.

Along the boundaries of the site, highly productive areas of intertidal mud support an array of wading and migratory birds and a diverse range of invertebrates including ragworms, the mudshrimp and the commercially important cockle. A biofilm of microalgae forms on the surface of the mudflats forming a crucial source of food for grazers.

The saltmarshes and reedbeds growing on the northern banks of the estuary stabilise the intertidal muds and provide a source of organic matter to the estuary. The saltmarshes are important foraging sites for wading birds and wildfowl, providing sheltered refuge at high tide. An abundance of marine worms, crustaceans and tiny snails live within the damp sediments between the vegetation.

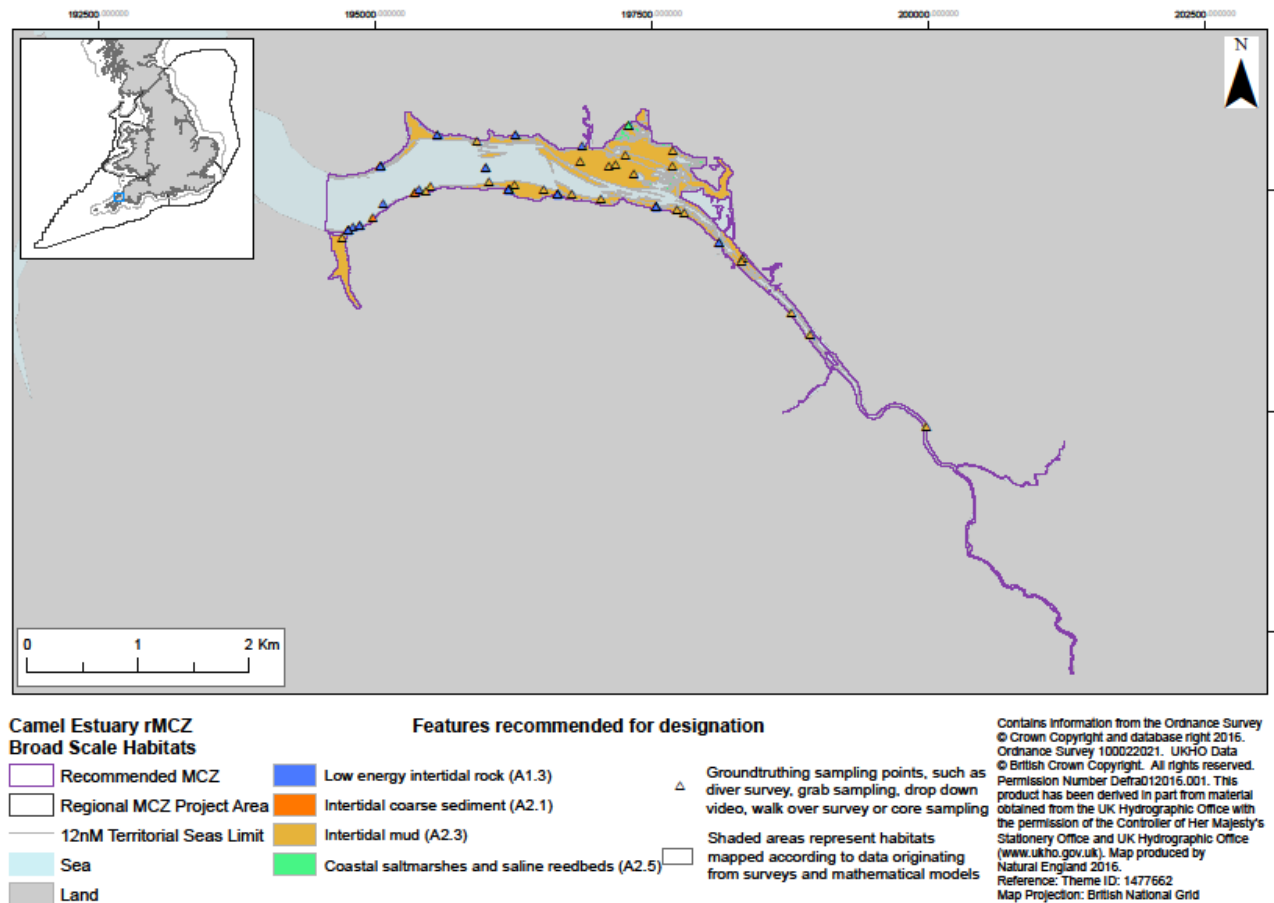
What would this site protect?

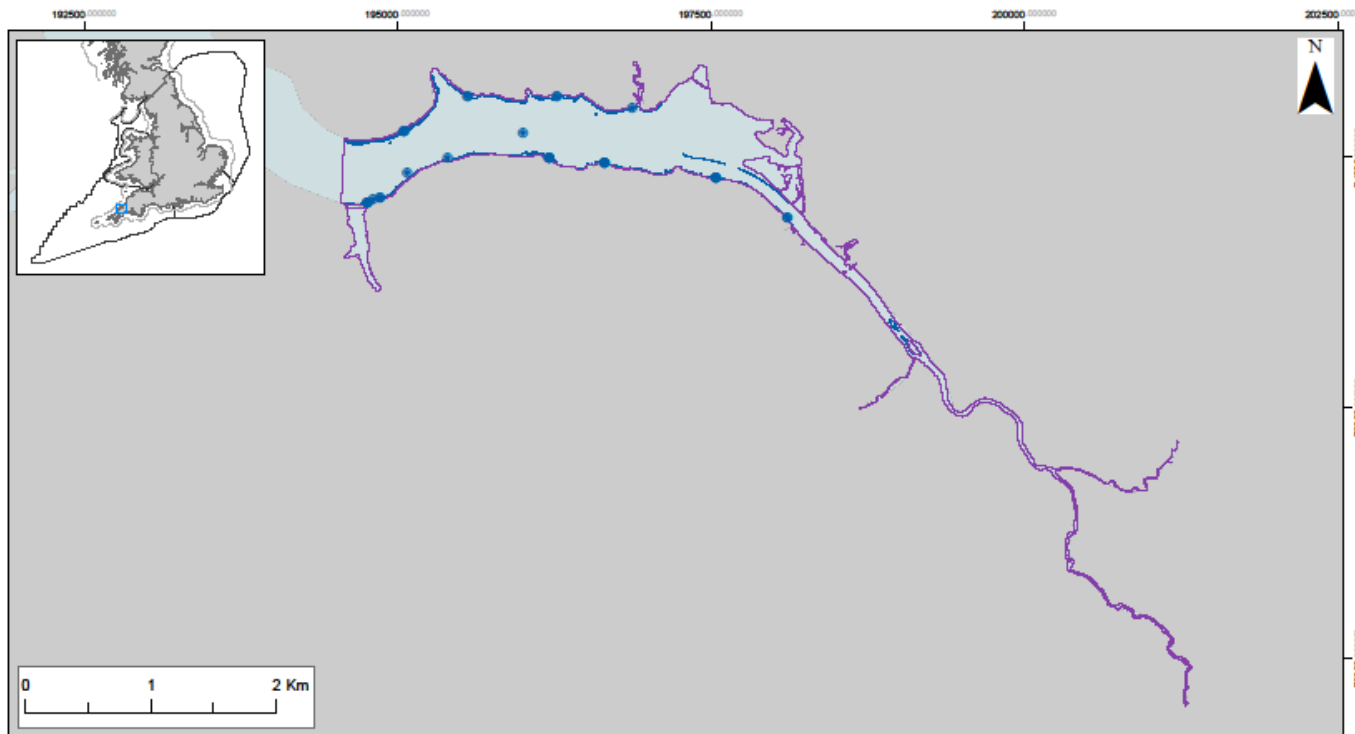
Designation would protect the following features. You can read more about the features this site protects and why they are important [here](#).

Feature	General Management Approach
Estuarine rocky habitats	Maintain in favourable condition
Intertidal coarse sediment	
Coastal saltmarshes and saline reedbeds	
Intertidal mud	
Low energy intertidal rock	

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](#).







Camel Estuary rMCZ
Features of Conservation Importance

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

Features recommended for designation

-  Estuarine rocky habitats
-  Estuarine rocky habitats

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 (www.ukho.gov.uk). Map produced by
 Natural England 2016.
 Reference: Theme ID: 1477662
 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 (rounded to nearest £100)
Ports and Harbours	Environmental Impact Assessments for navigational dredging	£2,000
Best estimate total cost		£2,000

Ports and harbours

To the north of the site at the mouth of the Camel Estuary is the port of Padstow. Navigable channels are maintained by the harbour commissioners through dredging. This dredging takes place at sites within 2.5 km of the MCZ. All future licence applications for dredging or for further port development will incur an additional environmental assessment cost to consider the possible effects of activities on the features designated within the site. It is possible that impacts could be ameliorated by changes to the dredging protocol.

Which activities are not likely to be affected?

These activities are known to take place at 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:

- Aquaculture
- Archaeological heritage
- Cables - power and telecommunication cables currently intersect the site
- Coastal Infrastructure
- Commercial Fishing
- Commercial Shipping

- Flood and coastal erosion risk management schemes
- Oil and gas
- Recreation

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>

For further information, please contact Defra on

- 03459 33 55 77 (UK only)
- +44 20 7238 6951 (from outside the UK)
- defra.helpline@defra.gsi.gov.uk



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