

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

Holderness Offshore

Recommended Marine Conservation Zone

June 2018

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

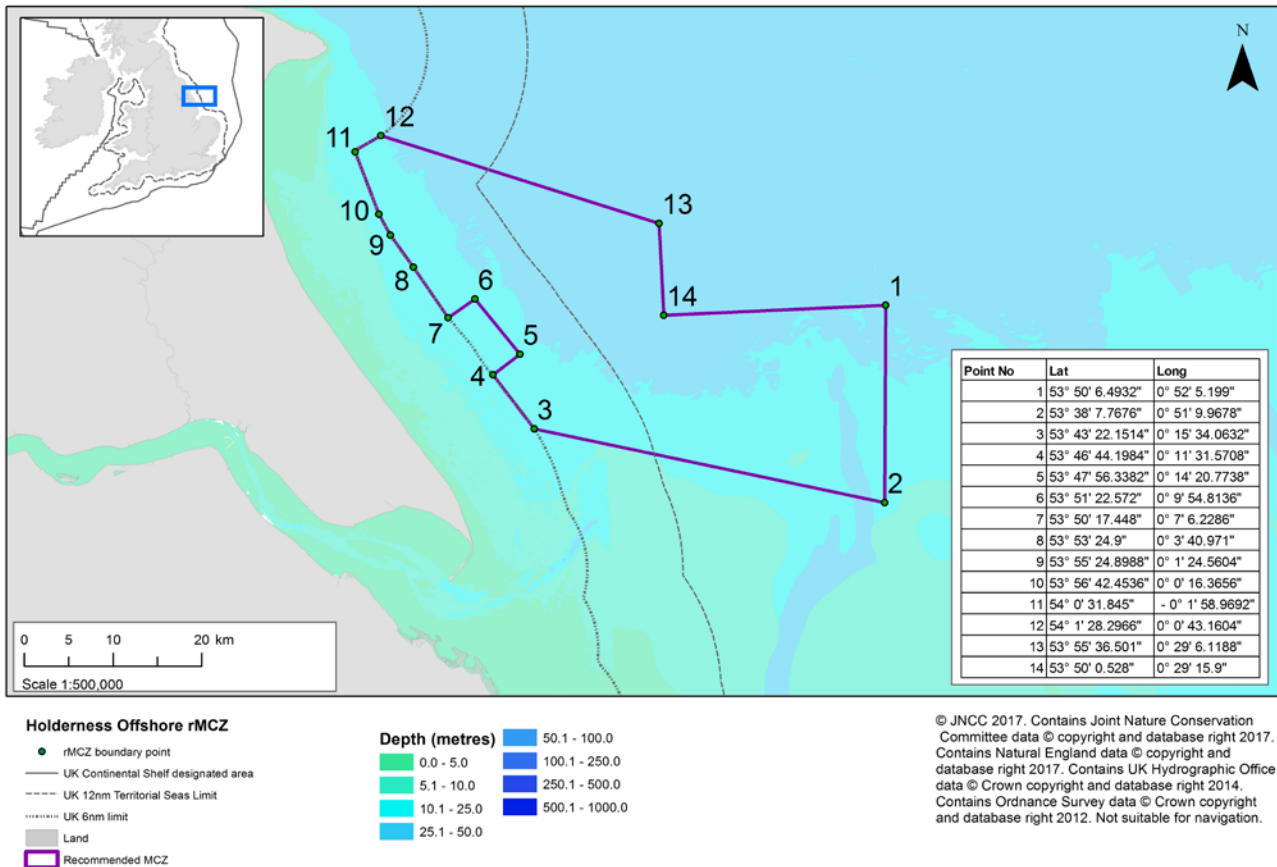


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Where is the site located?

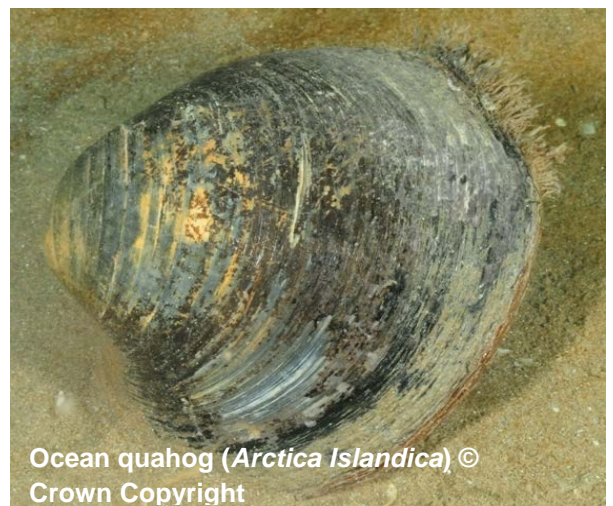
Holderness Offshore recommended Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ) is an inshore/offshore site that covers an area of 1176 km² and is located approximately 11 km offshore from the Holderness coast in the Southern North Sea. The site overlaps with the Southern North Sea Special Area of Conservation, which protects harbour porpoise.



Why is the site environmentally important?

The Holderness Offshore seabed is predominantly composed of sediment habitats ranging from subtidal sand to subtidal coarse sediments and contains part of a glacial tunnel valley. The varied nature of the seabed means it supports a wide range of animals, both on and in the sediment, such as worms, bivalves, starfish and crustaceans. The site is also a spawning and nursery ground for a number of fish species including lemon sole, plaice and European sprat.

Surveys have also identified ocean quahog (*Arctica islandica*) within the site. This bivalve mollusc is particularly slow growing and can take



up to 50 years to reach full size, growing up to 13 cm in width. Ocean quahogs are listed by the Oslo and Paris Convention for the Protection of the North East Atlantic (OSPAR¹) as a threatened and/or declining species.

What would this site protect?

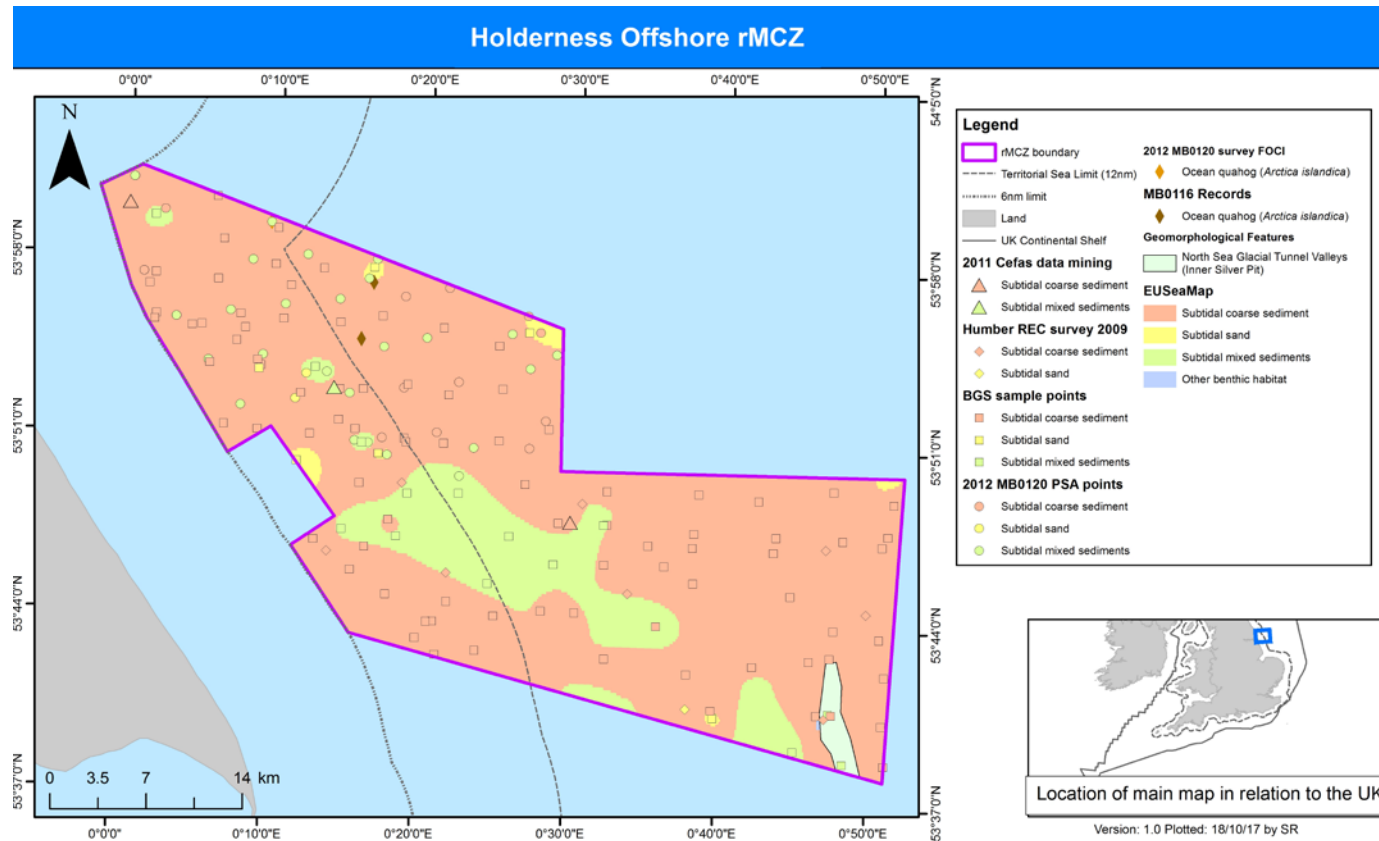
Designation would protect the following features. You can read more about the features this site protects and why they are important [here](#).

Feature	General management approach
North Sea Glacial Tunnel valleys	Maintain in favourable condition
Subtidal coarse sediment	Recover to favourable condition
Subtidal sand	
Subtidal mixed sediments	
Ocean Quahog (<i>Arctica islandica</i>)	

¹ The OSPAR Convention is the current legal instrument guiding international cooperation on the protection of the marine environment of the North-East Atlantic.

Where are the features located?

The following map shows the location of the features to be protected within the site. A range of different types of surveys have been used to create site maps. More detailed information on the techniques used can be found [here](#).



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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)
Commercial Fishing UK	Bottom trawls and dredges	£6,000
Commercial Fishing non-UK	Bottom trawls and dredges	Unquantified
Ports and Harbours	Environmental Impact Assessments	£1,000
Best estimate total cost		£7,000

Commercial Fishing UK

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

- Bottom trawls, dredges and mid-water trawls
- Lines, pots and traps

Alongside larger vessels, a number of under 15 metre vessels operate within the site, landing their catches to around 16 ports. A variety of both mobile and static gear is used and target species include crabs, lobsters, scallops, herring, whiting and cod. The activities likely to be affected by designation are shown in the table above.

Commercial Fishing non-UK

Fishing vessels from France, Belgium and The Netherlands operate within the site, commonly using bottom trawls and dredges.

Although impacts outside the UK are not quantified as part of the impact assessment, the implications of designation on non-UK commercial fishing vessels are considered in deciding which sites to designate. The activities likely to be affected by designation are shown in the table above.

Ports and Harbours

Environmental Impact Assessments for future licence applications related to nearby disposal sites and potential port activities within the boundary of the MCZ are likely to incur additional costs.

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:

- Archaeological heritage
- Cables – power and telecommunication cables currently intersect the site
- Commercial fishing – mid-water trawls and static gear
- National defence
- Oil and gas exploration and/or production
- Renewable energy

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

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