

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

## Morte Platform

### Recommended Marine Conservation Zone

June 2018

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



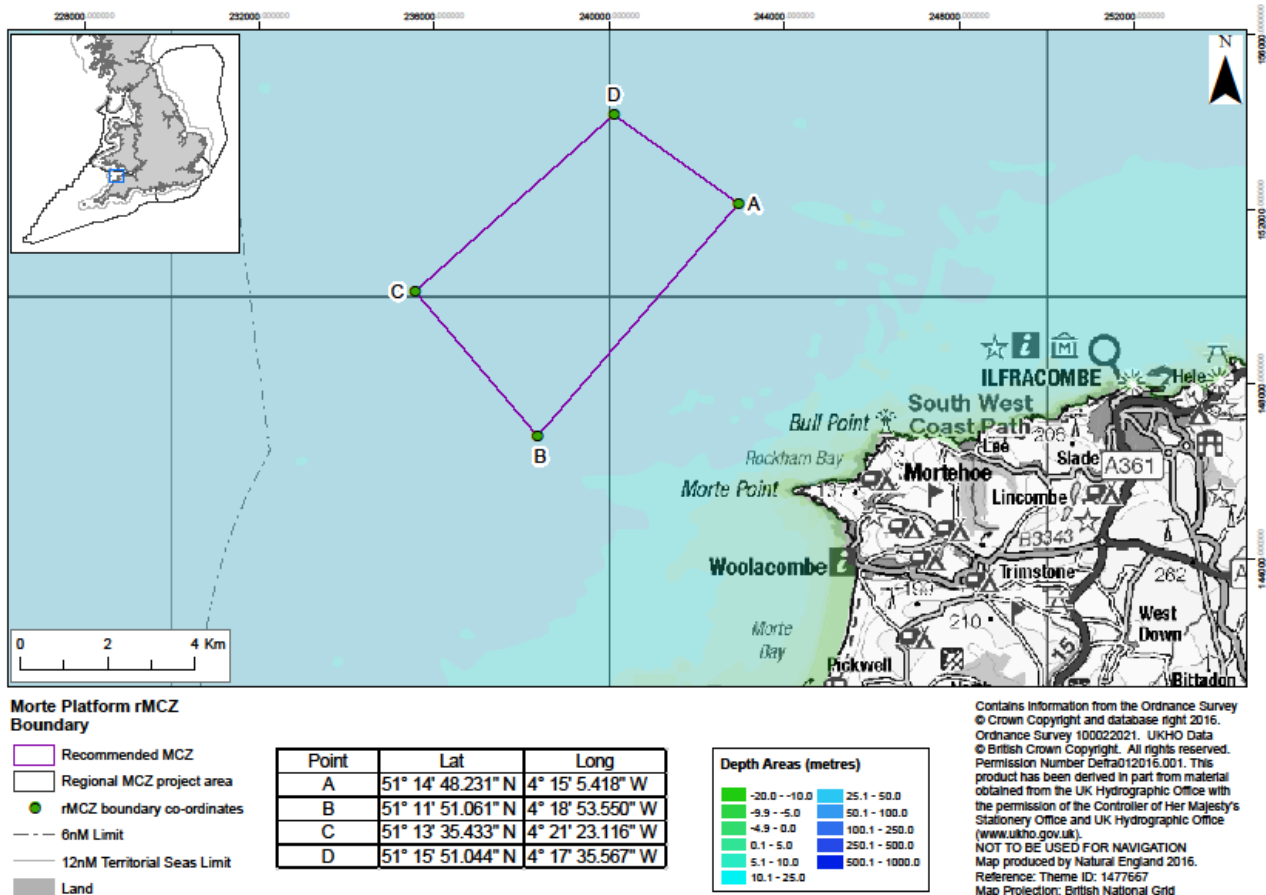
Moderate Energy Circalittoral Rock © Crown Copyright

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## Where is the site located?

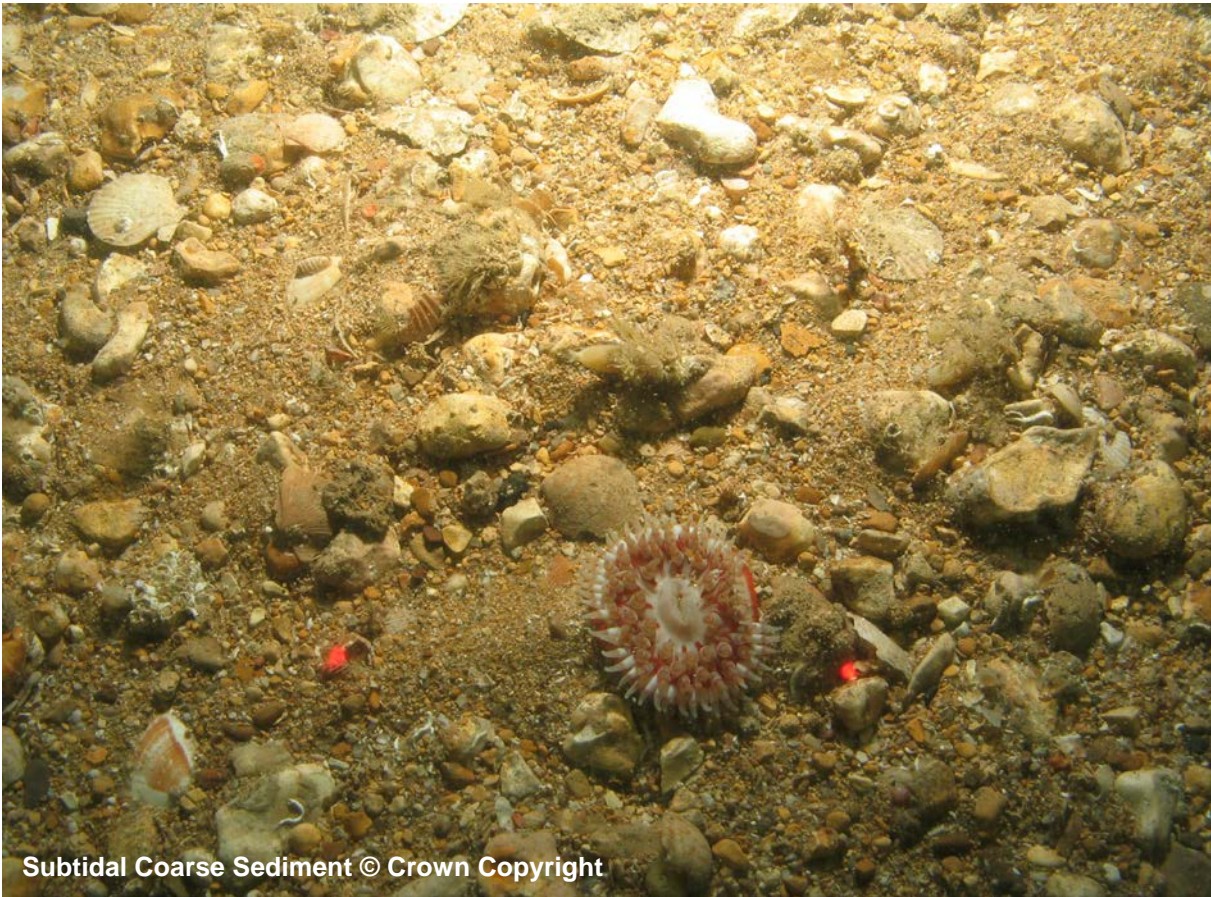
The Morte Platform recommended Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ) is an inshore site that covers an area of around 25 km<sup>2</sup>. It is located in the Western Channel and Celtic Sea region and lies approximately 5 km off the coast of North Devon.



## Why is the site environmentally important?

Morte Platform contains a mix of habitats that is rarely represented elsewhere in the UK, primarily due to the high tidal flows, high sediment content within the water column, and the mosaic of sediment and rock ridges within the site.

Subtidal sediment provides important nursery grounds for many ecologically and commercially important fish such as flatfish and seabass, and sand eel, which support seabirds such as puffin and guillemots. Circalittoral rock habitats support a range of marine life, including polychaetes, sponges, soft and hard corals, bryozoans as well as mobile species in more sheltered areas.



Subtidal Coarse Sediment © Crown Copyright



Moderate Energy Circalittoral Rock © Crown Copyright

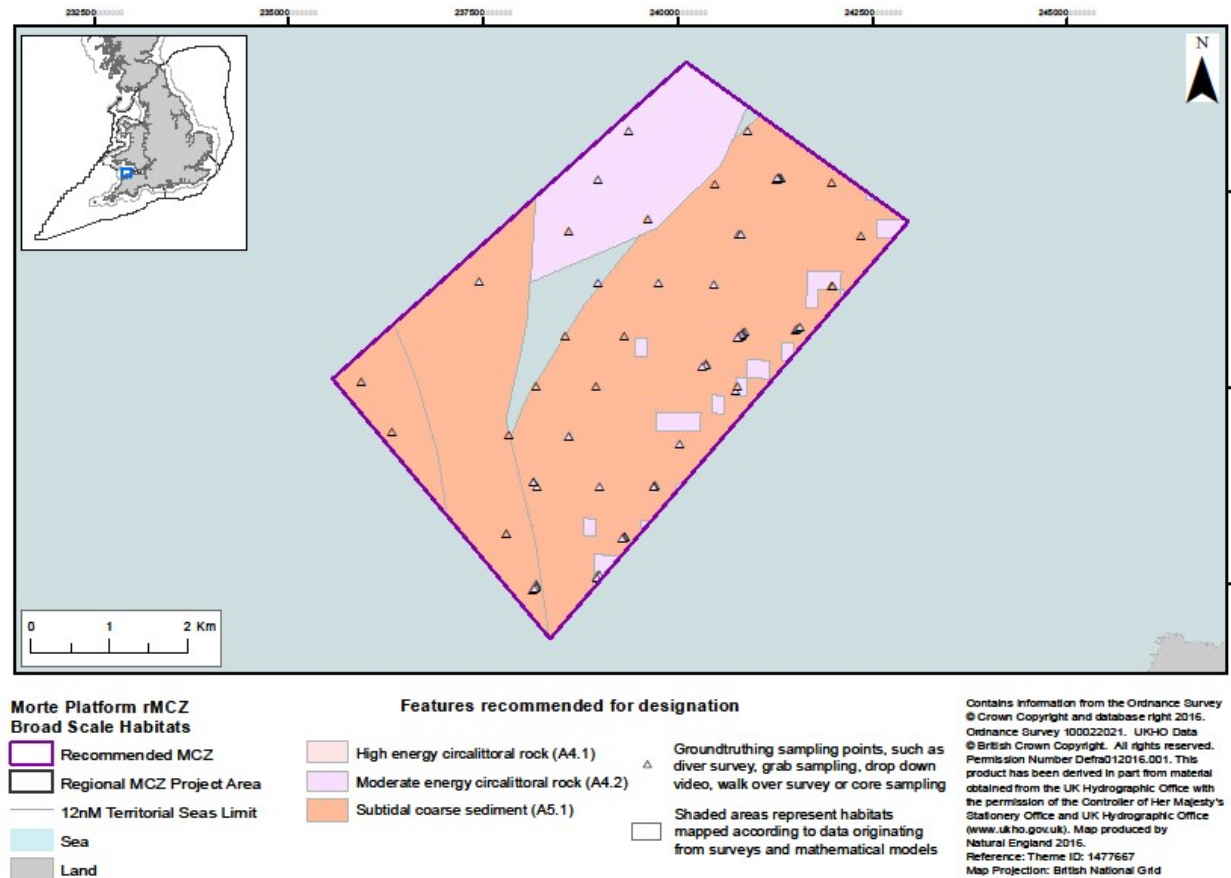
## What would this site protect?

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
Subtidal coarse sediment	Recover to favourable condition
High energy circalittoral rock	
Moderate energy circalittoral rock	

## 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](#).



## 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 trawling and dredging	£100
<b>Best estimate total cost</b>		<b>£100</b>

### Commercial Fishing UK

Fishing activity within this site predominantly uses static gear, although a low level of bottom trawling also takes place. Species caught include whelks, crabs, rays, squid and scallops.

The activities that are likely to be affected by designation are shown in the table.

## 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 that they are not likely to be damaging the features to be protected:

- Commercial fisheries – static gear
- Commercial shipping
- 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>

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