

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

North East of Haig Fras

Recommended Marine Conservation Zone

June 2018

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



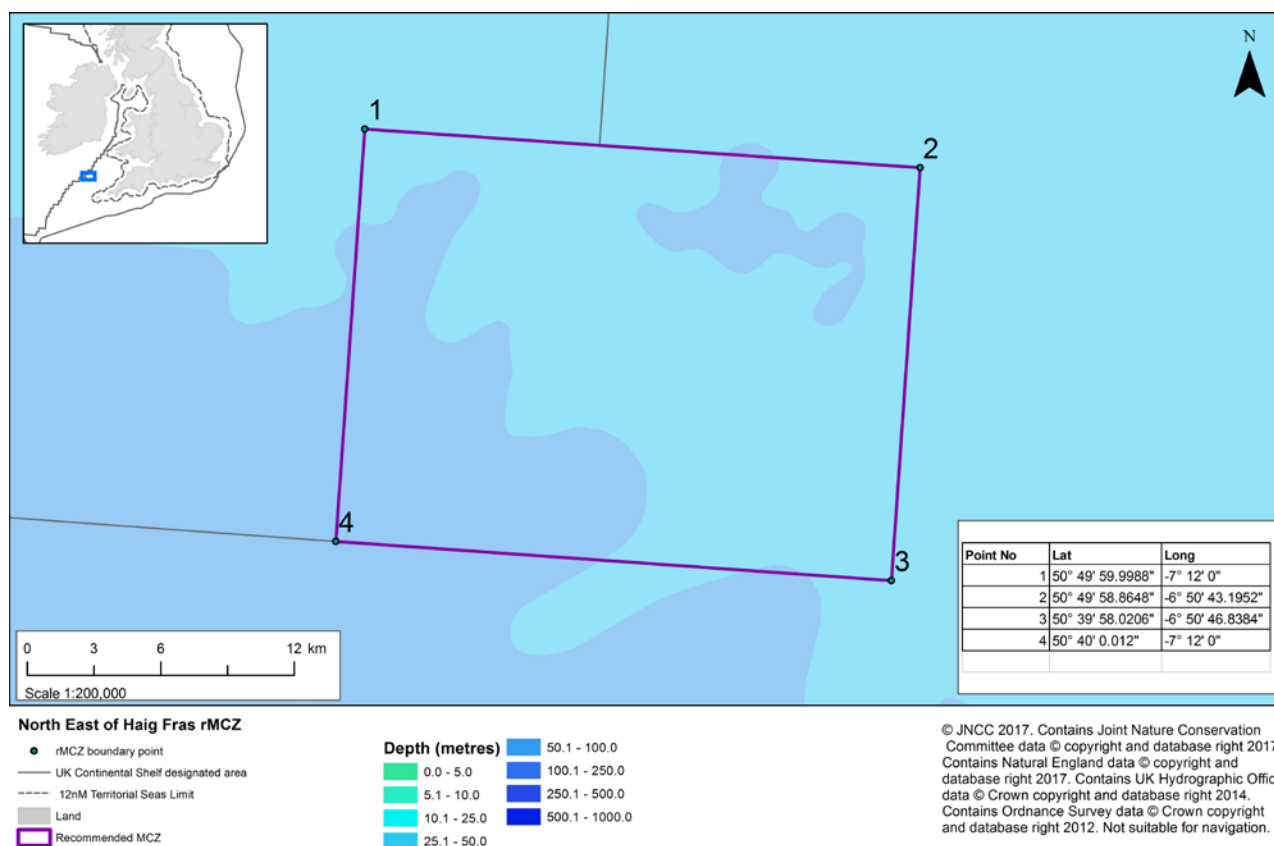
Subtidal coarse sediment © Natural England

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Where is the site located?

North East of Haig Fras recommended Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ) is an offshore site that covers an area of approximately 464 km² and is located in the Western Channel and Celtic Sea region. Depths within the site range between 50 m and 100 m, with some sections dipping below the 100 m depth contour.



Why is the site environmentally important?

The North East of Haig Fras site is an area of continental shelf. The seabed is characterised by a range of sediments including subtidal sand, subtidal mud and subtidal coarse sediment. In areas of deep water within the site the amount of light reaching the seabed is restricted, resulting in limited amounts of plant life and a seabed dominated by animal communities. Due to the varied nature of the seabed it supports a wide range of animals, both on and in the sediment, for example polychaete worms, bivalves, starfish, anemones, sea firs and sea urchins. The site is also important as a nursery and spawning area for fish.



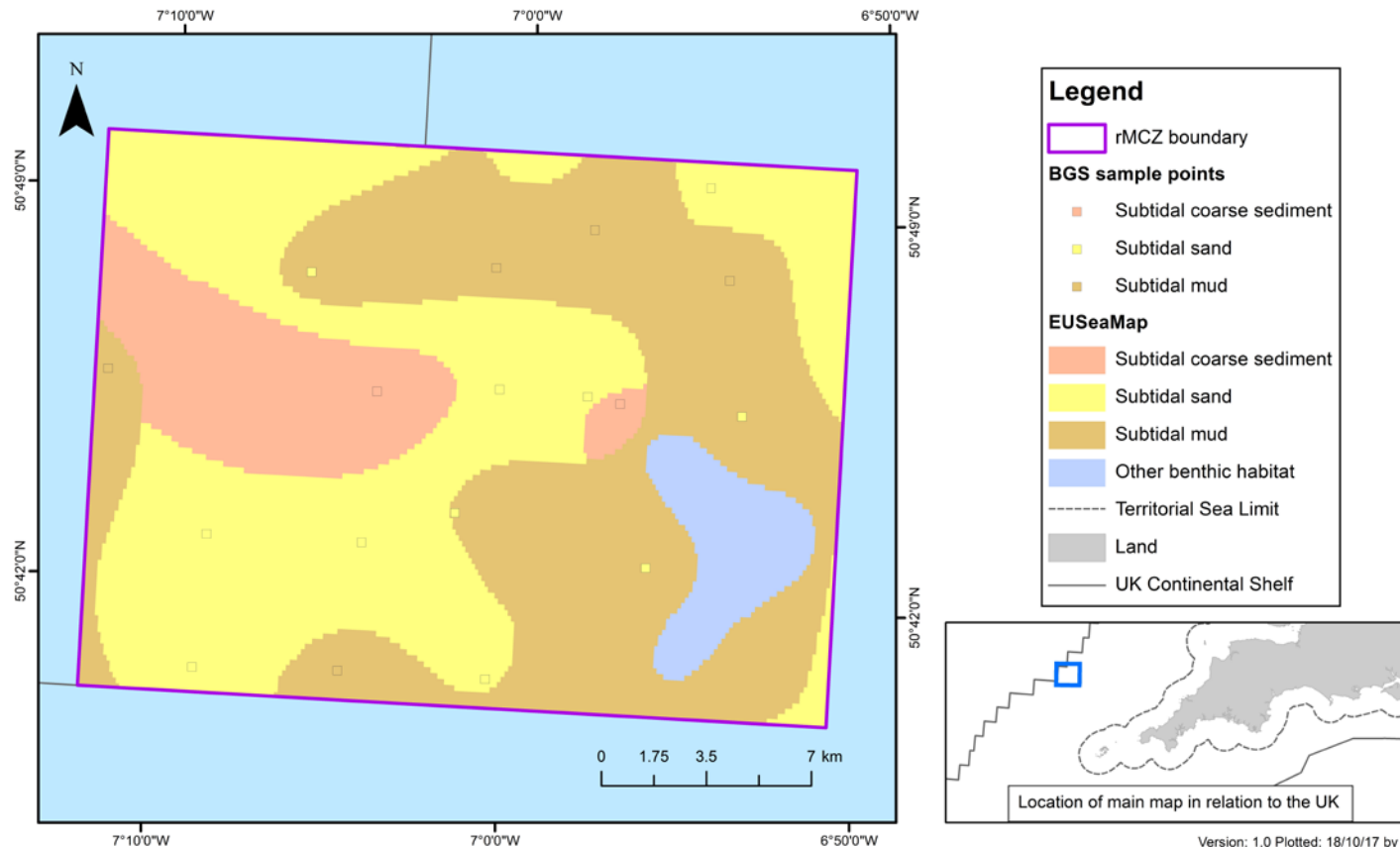
What would this site protect?

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
Subtidal sand	
Subtidal mud	

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 trawling	£100
Commercial fishing non-UK	Bottom trawling	Unquantified
Best estimate total cost		£100

Commercial Fishing UK

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

- Bottom trawls
- Gill nets

Beam trawling by large vessels (20-40 metres) occurs within the site as well as gill netting. Vessels active in the area target a number of species including hake, pollack, ling and haddock. The activities that are likely to be affected by designation are shown in the table above.

Commercial Fishing non-UK

Fishing fleets from France and the Republic of Ireland are active within this site, and a smaller number of vessels from Belgium also use the site. Bottom trawls and mid-water trawls are the main gear types used, and target species include cod, haddock and whiting.

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

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:

- Cables – power and telecommunication cables currently intersect the site
- Commercial fisheries – mid-water trawls
- Commercial shipping
- National defence

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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