

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

South West Deeps (East)

Recommended Marine Conservation Zone

June 2018

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



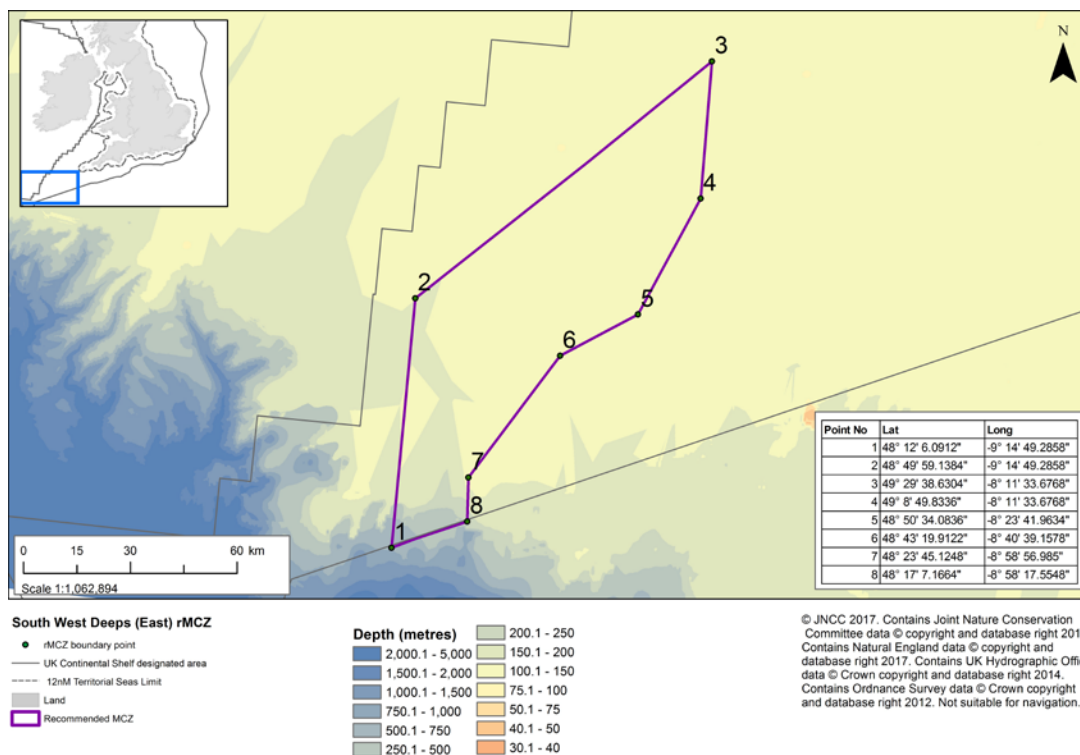
Deep sea bed © JNCC

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Where is the site located?

The South West Deeps (East) recommended Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ) is a large offshore site covering an area of 4,653 km². It is located in the Western Channel and Celtic Sea region, and the eastern side boundary is approximately 190 km southwest of the Land's End peninsula. The proposed boundary differs to the boundary recommended by the Regional MCZ Projects in 2011¹ and the new site boundary is now adjacent to the existing South West Deeps (West) MCZ. This change has been made to reduce the significant socioeconomic impact that the original site would have had on commercial fishing, particularly on non-UK fleets. The amended boundary is based on proposals presented by the French fishing industry and reduces the impact on non-UK fishing fleets whilst still protecting features of conservation importance.



Why is the site environmentally important?

The South West Deeps (East) site is proposed for three broad scale habitats and one geological feature. This large site contributes the greatest area of subtidal sand of all MCZs and existing marine protected areas within the Western Channel and Celtic Sea region and also includes large patches of subtidal coarse sediment. These broad-scale habitats provide home to a range of species. Across all designated and proposed Marine

¹ Regional (MCZ) Projects Finding Sanctuary report, 2011:

http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/PDF/120718_FindingSanctuary_FinalReport_14Sep2011.pdf

Protected Areas outside of Scotland, it is one of only two sites to protect seabed habitats beyond the shelf break. These deeper benthic habitats can be sedimentary or hard substrates, and generally support different communities than similar habitats in shallower areas. The geological feature Celtic Sea Relic Sandbanks are among the deepest and largest shelf sand ridges of their kind.



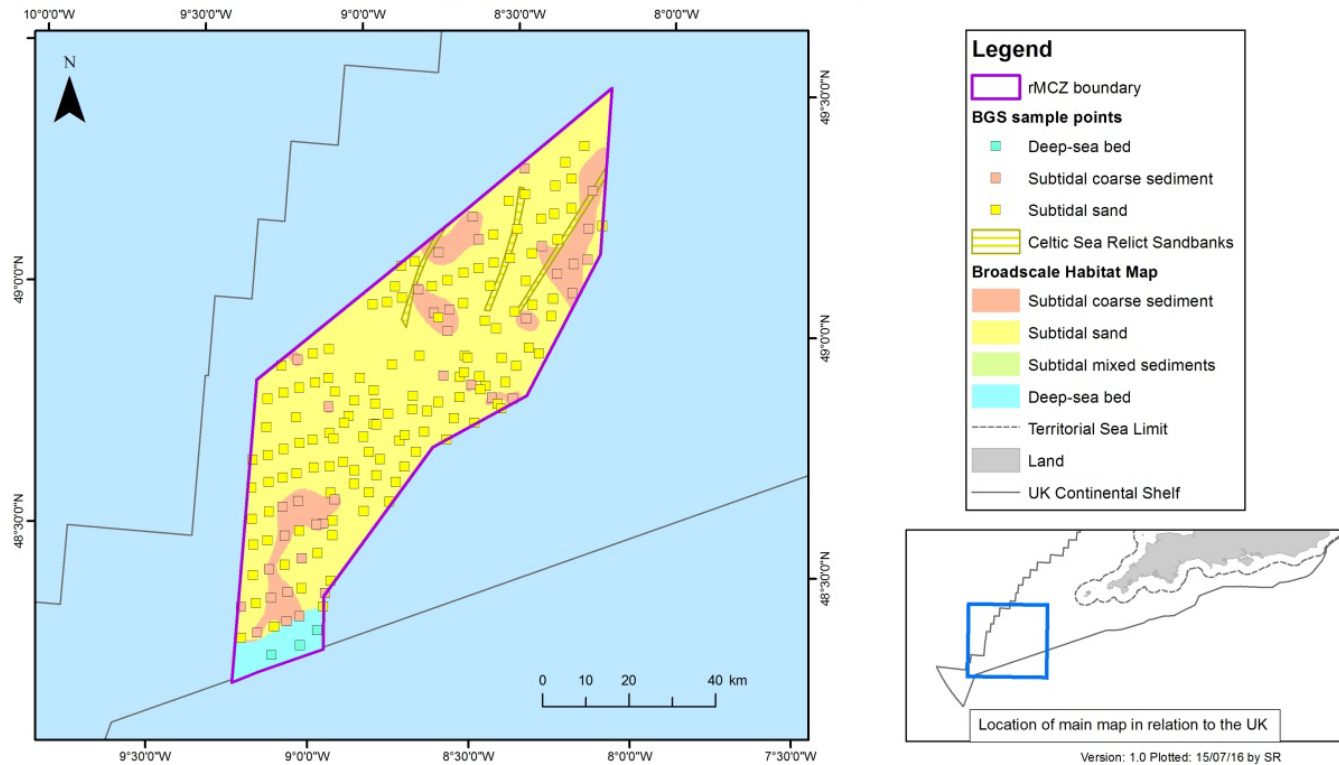
What would this site protect?

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	
Deep-sea bed	
Celtic Sea Relict Sandbanks	Maintain in favourable condition

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 and dredging	£8,800
Commercial Fishing non-UK	Bottom trawling and dredging	Unquantified
Best estimate total cost		£8,800

Commercial fishing UK

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

- Bottom trawls, dredges and mid-water trawls
- Gillnets and long lines

UK vessels fishing in this site predominantly use large bottom trawlers. Otter trawling, beam trawling and long lining take place within the site alongside netting and some mid-water trawling. The activities likely to be affected by designation are shown in the table above.

Commercial fishing non-UK

French and Spanish fishing fleets are active in this site, alongside a smaller number of vessels from the Republic of Ireland and Denmark. Bottom trawls, mid-water trawls and gillnets are the predominant gear types used.

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.

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 fisheries - mid-water trawls and static gear
- Commercial shipping
- Oil and gas exploration and/or production
- 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

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



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