

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

## South of Portland

## Recommended Marine Conservation Zone

June 2018

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

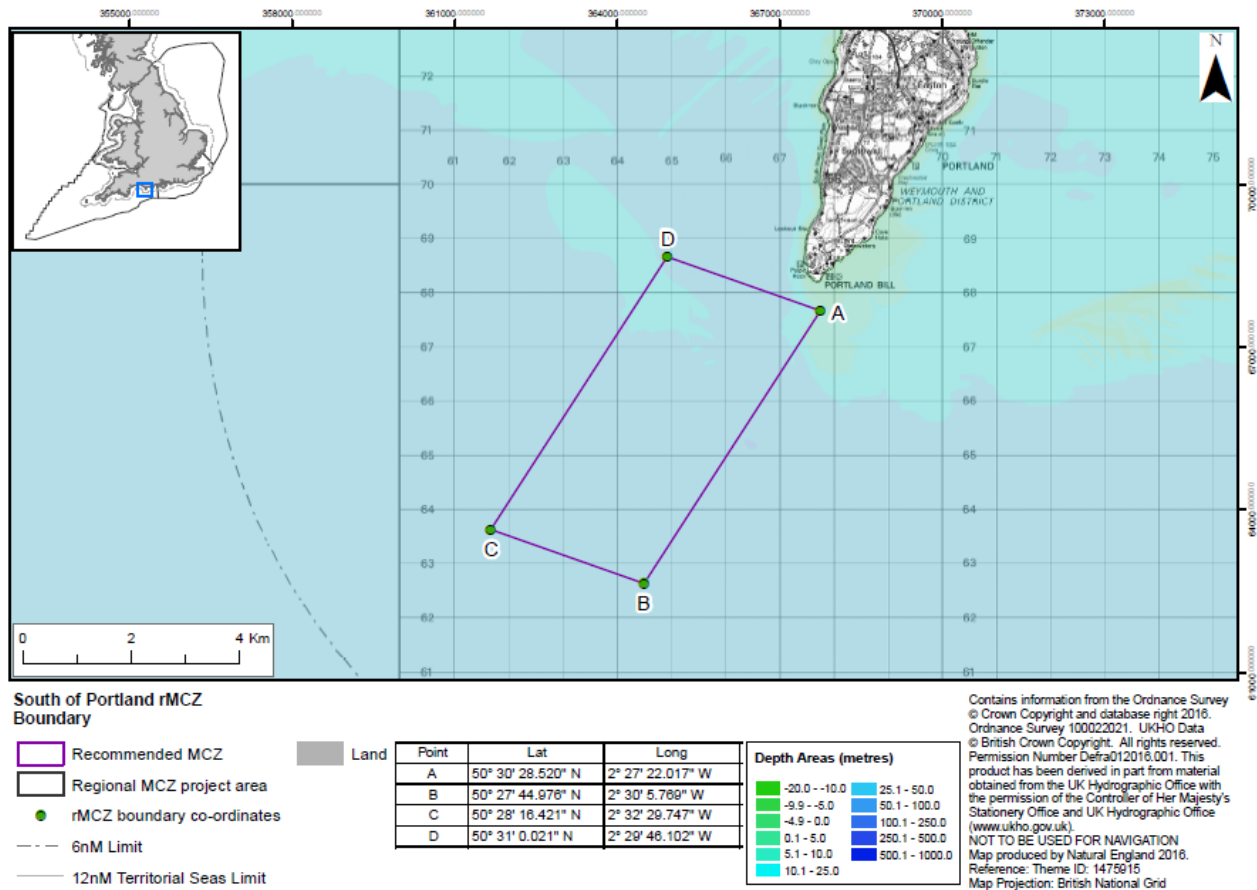


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# Where is the site located?

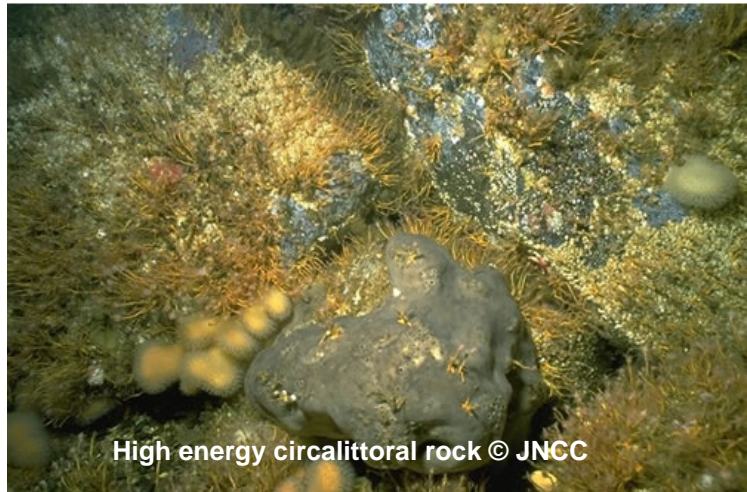
The South of Portland recommended Marine Conservation Zones (MCZ) is an inshore site which covers an area of 17 km<sup>2</sup>. It is located off Portland Bill on the South Coast in the Eastern Channel region.



# Why is the site environmentally important?

The South of Portland site is characterised by its strong currents and tidal streams, and provides a variety of habitats from rocky habitats to softer sediments such as sands. Because of this diversity, the site supports a wide range of species. The rock features on the site are exposed to moderate to high wave exposure, and are dominated by species such as cup coral, anemones, and bryozoan. Blue mussels, crustaceans and molluscs are also found in rock crevices. Subtidal habitats are often highly mobile and characterised by boulders, cobbles, pebbles and gravels which support species such as anemones, barnacles, sea cucumbers, urchins, and spiny and common starfish.

The softer subtidal features of the site include fine sands that protect a range of worms including tube and reef-building worms. Additionally this site includes a proportion of the Portland Deep geological feature, an enclosed rock basin and an example of tidal scour field. This feature supports a range of species including anemones, sponges, sea squirts and pink sea fans and fragile ross.



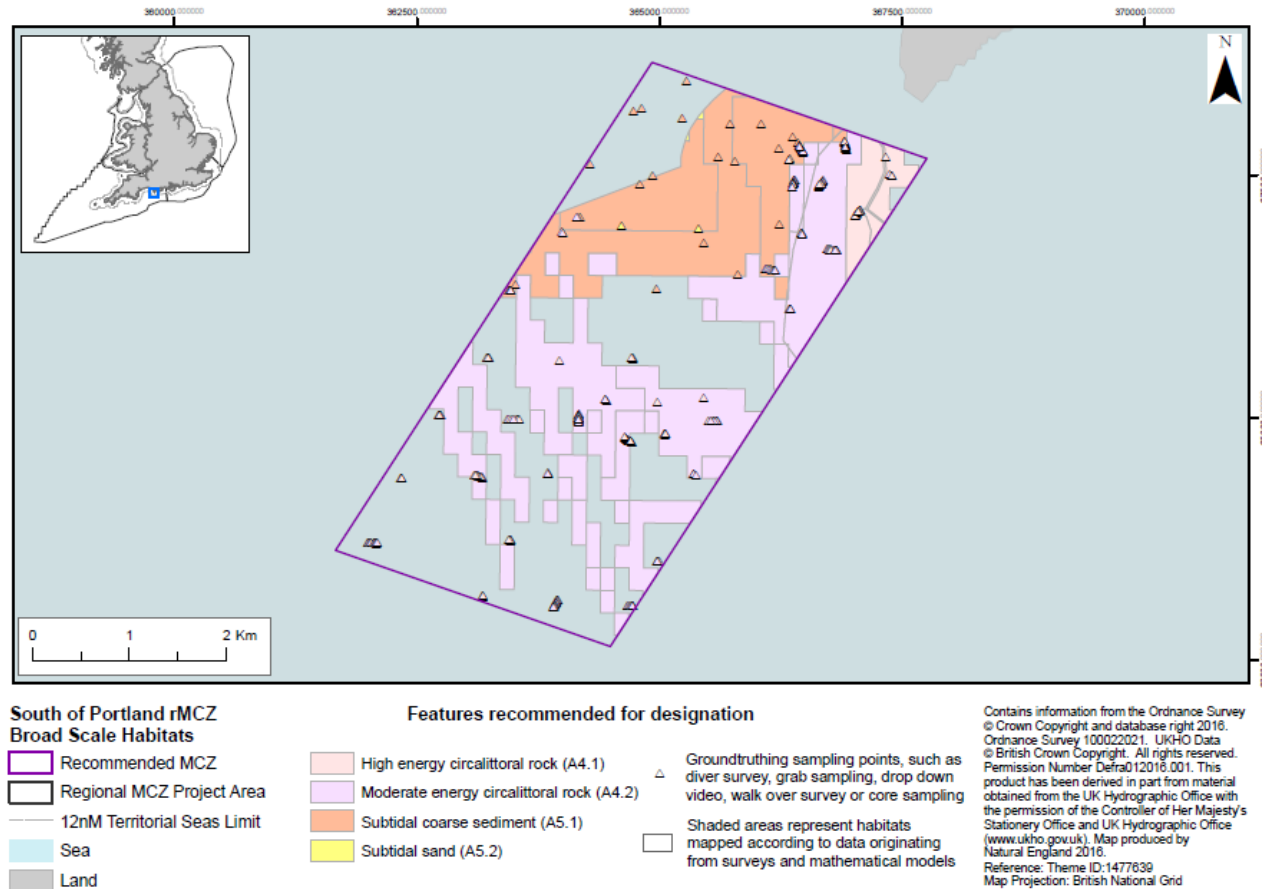
## What would this site protect?

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
Portland Deep geological feature	Maintain in favourable condition
Subtidal sand	
High energy circalittoral rock	Recover to favourable condition
Moderate energy circalittoral rock	
Subtidal coarse sediment	
Subtidal mixed sediments	

## 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.	£300
Renewable Energy - wave & tidal	Environmental Impact Assessments	Unquantified
<b>Best estimate total cost</b>		<b>£300</b>

### Commercial Fishing UK

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

- Bottom trawls and dredges.

There is a moderate level of exposure to demersal trawls and dredging for scallops is also thought to take place in the area. Fishing activities are primarily restricted to the fringe of the site due to existing site closures to towed gear.

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

### Renewable energy - wave and tidal

There is one wave and tidal demonstration project in the pre-planning stages. The site leased is by the Crown Estate for a tidal stream project which could generate between 10 and 30 MW. Future developments (including cables) that overlap with or are within 1 km of the site will incur an additional environmental impact assessment cost.

## 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:

- Commercial fishing – 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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