Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

Studland Bay

Recommended Marine Conservation Zone

June 2018

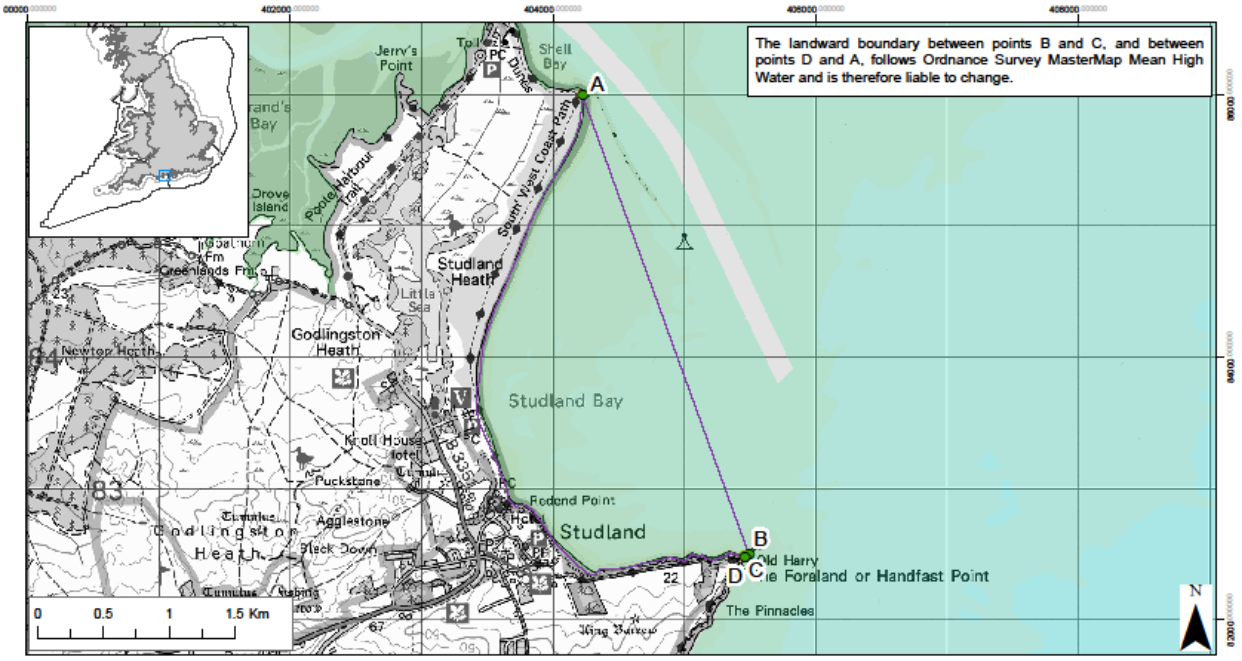
Consultation on Sites Proposed for Designation in the Third Tranche of Marine Conservation Zones

Seagrass bed Studland © Doug Anderson

Contents

Where is the site located?

Studland Bay recommended Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ) is an inshore site that covers an area of approximately 4 km². The MCZ is located on the south coast of Dorset in the eastern English Channel. The site encompasses Studland Bay stretching from the edge of Shell Bay in the north to Old Harry Rocks in the south.



Studland Bay rMCZ Boundary

- Recommended MCZ
- Regional MCZ project area
- rMCZ boundary co-ordinates
- 12nM Territorial Seas Limit
- Land

Point	Lat	Long
A	50° 40' 24.862" N	1° 56' 29.730" W
B	50° 38' 31.739" N	1° 55' 25.406" W
C	50° 38' 31.102" N	1° 55' 26.847" W
D	50° 38' 31.079" N	1° 55' 26.941" W

Depth Areas (metres)

-20.0 - -10.0 | -9.9 - -5.0 | -4.9 - 0.0 | 0.1 - 5.0 | 5.1 - 10.0 | 10.1 - 25.0 | 25.1 - 50.0 | 50.1 - 100.0 | 100.1 - 250.0 | 250.1 - 500.0 | 500.1 - 1000.0

Map produced by Natural England 2016.
Reference: Theme ID: 1477636
Map Projection: British National Grid

Why is the site environmentally important?

The sheltered nature of Studland Bay, being protected from the prevailing south-westerly winds and waves, and the shallow, sandy seabed provide the ideal habitat for dense seagrass meadows to form. Seagrasses provide cover and shelter for a variety of fish and invertebrate species (worms, crustaceans and molluscs). Their roots are a vital stabiliser of the surrounding sediments preventing coastal erosion, and are as an import sink for CO_2 from the atmosphere.

The seagrasses within Studland Bay are also home to the short-snouted seahorse (*Hippocampus hippocampus*) and the long-snouted seahorse (*Hippocampus guttulatus*). Both species are known to breed within the site, with Studland Bay being the only known place in the UK where the long-snouted seahorse breeds. Many other species are found in

the seagrasses and surrounding areas of sand including pipefish, wrasses and juvenile species of commercially important fish such as bass, bream and flatfish.


Subtidal coarse sediment © Crown Copyright

The areas of coarse gravelly and sandy sediment found between high and low tide and below the low water mark are ecologically important supporting a wide variety of species including algae, crustaceans and echinoderms (urchins and sea stars).

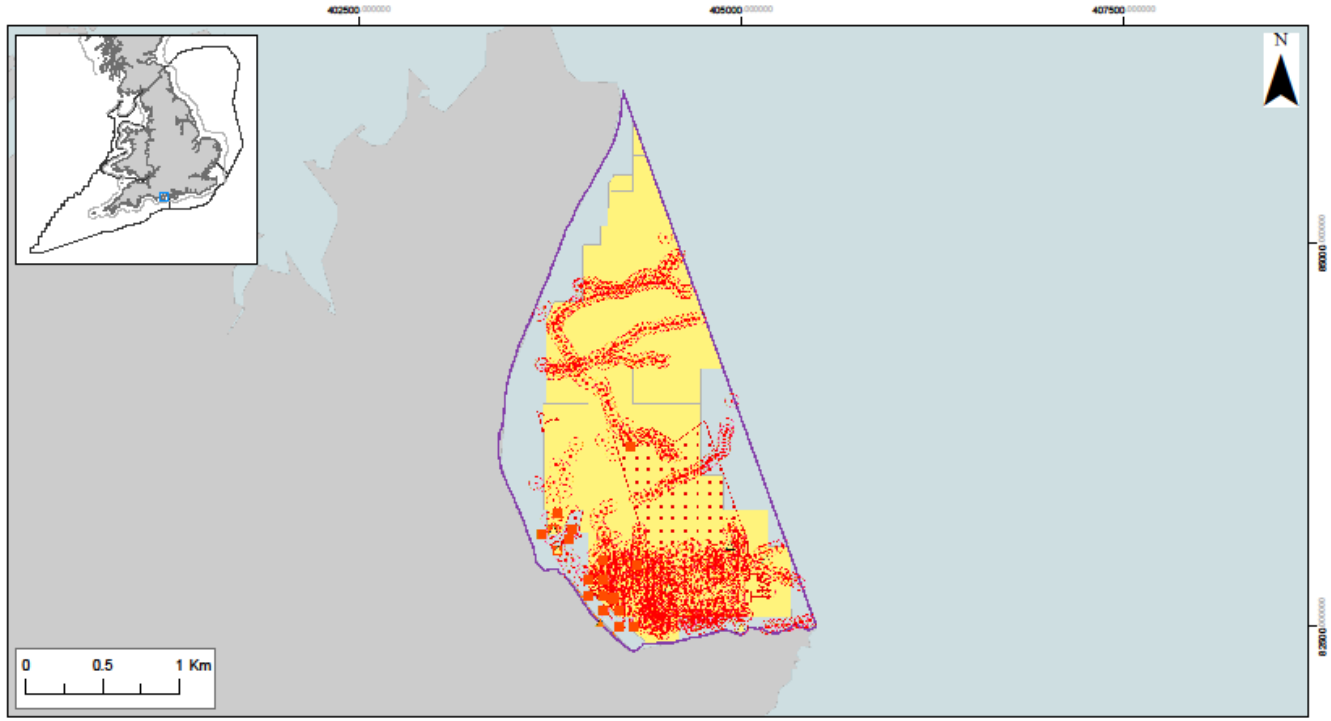
What would this site protect?

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
Intertidal coarse sediment	Maintain in favourable condition
Long-snouted seahorse (*Hippocampus guttulatus*)	
Subtidal sand	
Seagrass beds	Recover to favourable condition
Subtidal coarse sediment	

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, dredging and potting	£300
Ports and Harbours	Environmental Impact Assessments	£20,000
Recreation	Anchoring and mooring	£93,000
Best estimate total cost		**£113,300**

Commercial Fishing UK

The site is subject to low levels of fishing activity from potting and occasional trawling and dredging.

Ports and harbours

The site is located close to the entrance to Poole Harbour, a busy commercial and recreational port. Maintenance dredging occurs within 5 km of the site and the Swanage bay disposal site also lies within this distance. All future applications will need to consider the possible effects of the activities on the features designated and are likely to incur additional costs as part of the Environmental Impact Assessment.

Recreation

Studland bay is a very popular location for recreational boaters, both on day trips from the surrounding area and staying overnight from further afield. During the peak summer months the bay can expect in excess of 100 boats on some days with the majority of these anchoring up. Approximately 51 moorings are present within the bay.

The cost estimates are based on three different scenarios of management of the site to prevent further damage to the features and habitats within the bay. Scenario 1, the

cheapest option, would impose no management measures on anchoring but would require the replacement of the current ‘block-and-chain’ moorings with eco-moorings. Eco-moorings are designed to have very little impact on the seabed by lifting any rope or chain off the seabed at all times preventing the rotating and cutting action of standard moorings.

Scenario 2 would involve the introduction of no-anchoring zones in areas of seagrass, the replacement of the current moorings with eco-moorings and the installation of additional eco-moorings (totalling 100). Outside of the seagrass areas mooring restrictions would not be in place. The costs are associated with the replacement and installation of additional eco-moorings and impact on the economy with displacement of a number of vessels from the region.

Scenario 3 would involve the introduction of no-anchoring zones over the areas of mapped seagrass and the removal of all moorings from the seagrass areas. This scenario is estimated to have the highest cost at £171,000 per year with the majority of this cost associated with the impact on the economy with displacement of a number of vessels from the region.

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:

- Coastal development and flood and erosion risk management schemes
- Coastal infrastructure
- Commercial shipping

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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