

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

Coquet to St. Mary's Recommended Marine Conservation Zone

January 2015

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



Intertidal sand and muddy sand - sandy seashore © Amy Ridgeway (JNCC)

Contents

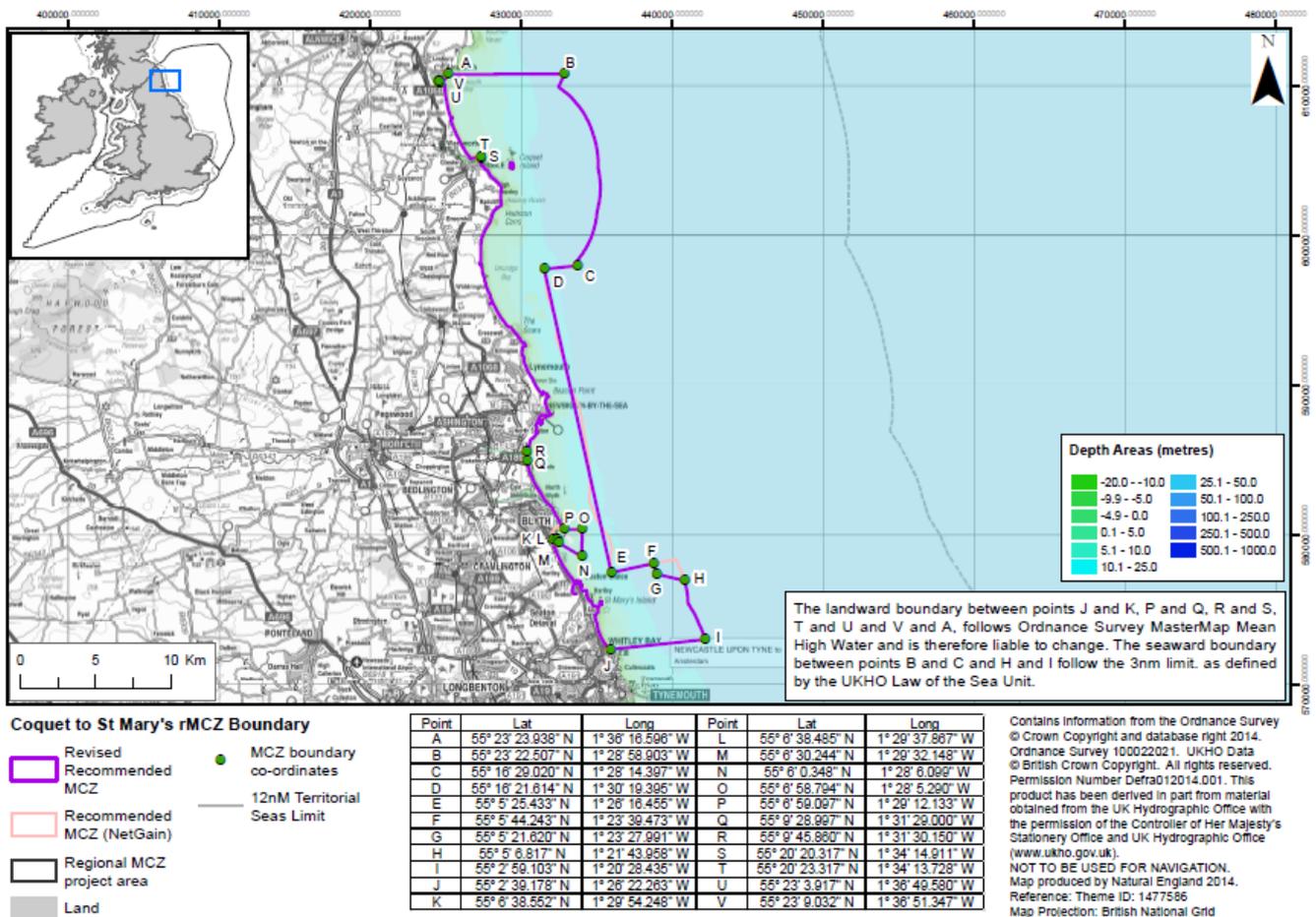
Where the site is located.....	3
How to comment on the consultation	3
Why this site is environmentally important	4
What this site would protect	4
Where the features are located.....	5
Features that are not proposed for designation	7
Activities that are likely to be affected	7
Ports, harbours and shipping	8
Additional Information	9

Where the site is located

Coquet to St Mary's recommended Marine Conservation Zone (rMCZ) is an inshore site located on the Northumberland coast.

The site covers approximately 200 km² encompassing areas around both Coquet and St Mary's Island and extends from the mean high water mark to a maximum depth of around 30 metres.

The site boundary has been modified to exclude the southern area of the Port of Blyth's statutory limits to reduce the impact on the port. A 250 metre buffer has been placed around the Blyth disposal site located in the south west of the site and between points D to E the boundary has been straightened. The new boundaries retain the ecological value of the site.



How to comment on the consultation

You can comment on this proposal by responding to the [consultation](#) taking place between 30th January and 24th April 2015.

Why this site is environmentally important

The seabed across the site is composed of a range of intertidal and subtidal rock and sediment features. The designation of these features helps to fill gaps within the network.

A number of subtidal habitats support a variety of seabed communities, including immobile species such as anemones, soft corals and sea squirts. In addition, these complex habitats and communities support mobile species such as starfish, sea urchins, crabs, lobsters and includes the first ever record of the Arctic cushion star for the English coast.

The site also supports diverse intertidal habitats including intertidal underboulder communities. These are where boulders create damp and shaded areas which provide refuge to important communities of plants such as sea mats, sponges, and tufts of pink coralline seaweed which encrust the undersurfaces of the boulder. This provides a habitat for animals like sea slugs which feed on the sponges, as well as brittlestars, porcelain crabs and squat lobsters which cling to the undersides of boulders as well as other crabs, fish, and young edible lobsters which hide amongst the boulders.

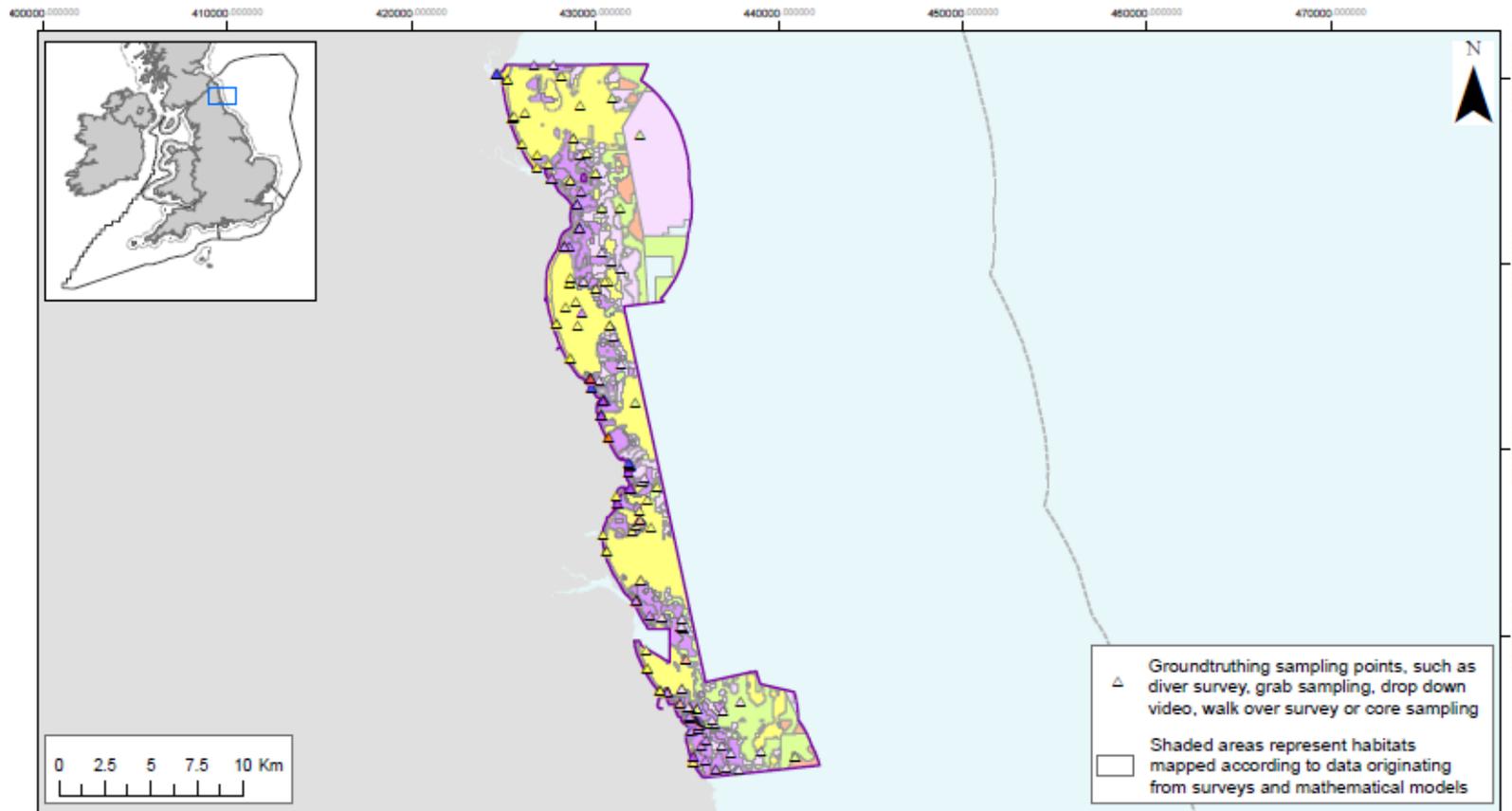
What this site would protect

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
Low energy intertidal rock	Maintain at favourable condition
Moderate energy intertidal rock	
High energy intertidal rock	
Intertidal coarse sediment	
Intertidal sand and muddy sand	
Intertidal mud	
Intertidal mixed sediments	
Intertidal under boulder communities	
Peat and clay exposures	
Moderate energy infralittoral rock	
High energy infralittoral rock	
Moderate energy circalittoral rock	
Subtidal coarse sediment	
Subtidal sand	
Subtidal mixed sediments	

Where the features are located

The following maps show the location of the features to be protected. A range of different types of surveys have been used to create these maps. More detailed information on the techniques used and the features themselves can be found [here](#).



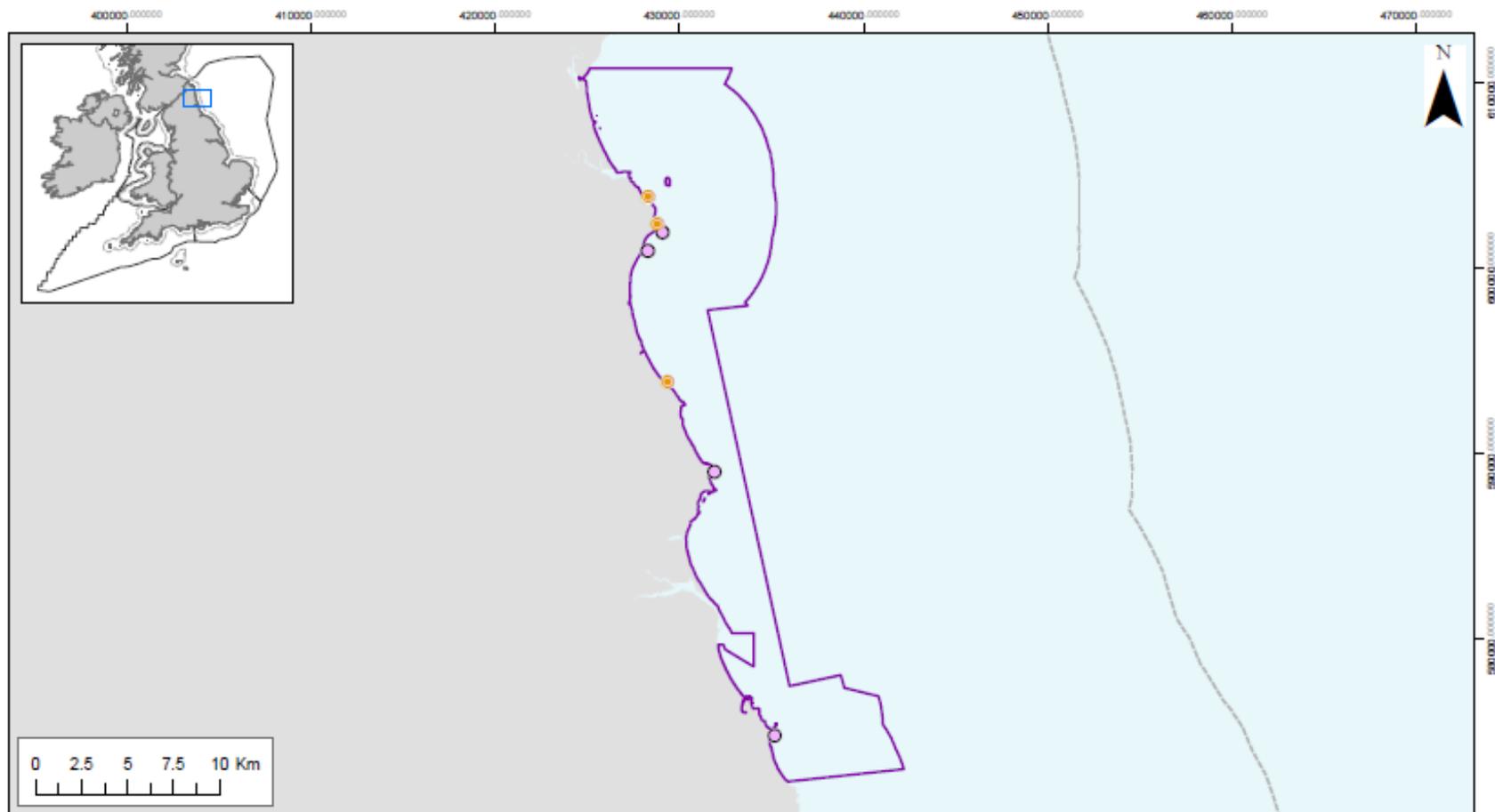
Coquet to St Mary's recommended MCZ Broad Scale Habitats

- Recommended MCZ
- Regional MCZ Project Area
- 12nM Territorial Seas Limit
- Sea
- Land

Features Proposed for 2015 designation

- | | |
|--|--|
| High energy intertidal rock (A1.1) | High energy infralittoral rock (A3.1) |
| Moderate energy intertidal rock (A1.2) | Moderate energy infralittoral rock (A3.2) |
| Low energy intertidal rock (A1.3) | Moderate energy circalittoral rock (A4.2) |
| Intertidal coarse sediment (A2.1) | Subtidal coarse sediment (A5.1) |
| Intertidal sand and muddy sand (A2.2) | Subtidal sand (A5.2) |
| Intertidal mud (A2.3) | Subtidal mixed sediments (A5.4) |
| Intertidal mixed sediments (A2.4) | |

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 Natural England 2014.
 Reference: Theme ID: 1477586
 Map Projection: British National Grid



**Coquet to St Mary's recommended MCZ
Features of Conservation Importance**

- Recommended MCZ
- Regional MCZ Project Area
- 12nM Territorial Seas Limit
- Sea
- Land

Features Proposed for 2015 designation

- Peat and clay exposures
- Intertidal under boulder communities
- Intertidal under boulder communities

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 Natural England 2014.
 Reference: Theme ID: 1477586
 Map Projection: British National Grid

Features that are not proposed for designation

The following features are not proposed for designation as there is currently insufficient supporting evidence. Inclusion of these features may be considered if scientific evidence becomes available:

- estuarine rocky habitats,
- littoral chalk communities,
- tide-swept channels,
- high energy circalittoral rock,
- low energy circalittoral rock,
- sheltered muddy gravels,
- subtidal mud,
- mud habitats in deep water,
- ross worm reefs (*Sabellaria spinulosa*),
- ocean quahog (*Arctica islandica*).

Activities that are likely to be affected

Management decisions are taken on a case by case basis by relevant regulators. Management will not automatically mean that economic and recreational activities will be restricted, decisions will be based on the specifics of each case. Restrictions on an activity will depend on the sensitivity of species, habitats and geological/geomorphological features (for which a site is designated) to the activities taking place in that area. More detail is available in the [Impact Assessment](#).

Sectors or activities likely affected by designation		
Sector	Activity Affected	Best Cost Estimate (£) per year
Ports, harbours and shipping	Navigational dredging, disposal sites, port development.	11,300
Best estimate total cost		11,300

Ports, harbours and shipping

This site is located close to the Port of Blyth. All future licence applications made in relation to port, harbour and commercial shipping activities will need to consider the possible effects of their activities on the designated MCZ features.

The activities which we are aware take place, and are likely to see additional costs incurred when carrying out Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA) for future licence applications, are as follows:

- navigational dredging within 5 km of the site,
- disposal of materials at disposal sites within 5 km of the rMCZ.

The impact on features in the rMCZ will also need to be considered if there is any future port development.

Activities that are unlikely to be affected

These activities are known to take place at this site but are not likely to be damaging to the features proposed for designation at their current levels of intensity:

- coastal development,
- water abstraction,
- commercial shipping (transit of vessels),
- sea coal extraction,
- one active power export cable intersects the site,
- the planned Norway Interconnector (electricity – National Grid) will intersect the site,¹
- commercial fisheries - all gear types,
- renewables, including Dogger Bank and Blyth wind-farms.

¹ <http://www2.nationalgrid.com/About-us/European-business-development/Interconnectors/norway/>

Additional Information

To read the full consultation document, or respond to the consultation, please visit

<https://consult.defra.gov.uk/marine/tranche2mczs>

To read the advice provided by Natural England, please visit

<http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5803843768025088?category=6742552893980672>

For further information, please contact Defra on

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