

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

Farnes East

Recommended Marine Conservation Zone

January 2015

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



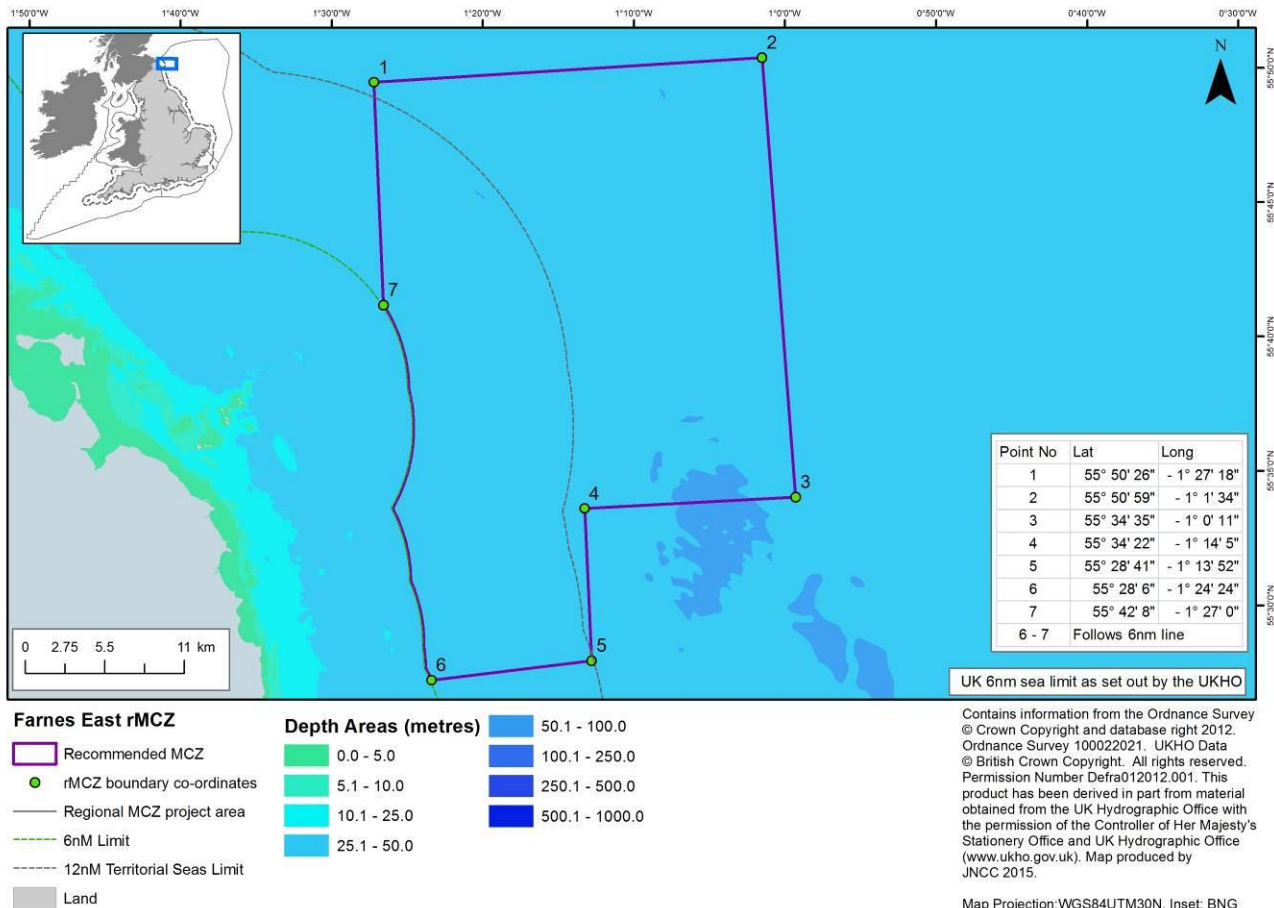
Moderate energy circalittoral rock - deeper water rock, with some shelter from waves and currents © JNCC

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	6
Activities that are likely to be affected	6
UK commercial fishing.....	7
Non-UK commercial fishing.....	7
Activities that are unlikely to be affected	8
Additional Information	8

Where the site is located

Farnes East recommended Marine Conservation Zone (rMCZ) crosses the 12 nm (nautical miles) territorial seas limit and is located both inshore and offshore. The site is located off the Northumberland Coast and covers an area of 945 km², ranging in depth from 30 to 100 metres.



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 of Farnes East rMCZ mainly consists of rock, subtidal sand, mud and coarse and mixed sediments, and may contain peat and clay exposures.

The moderate energy circalittoral rock found within the site supports a range of species. The depth means that lack of sunlight prevents seaweeds from growing, and the marine environment becomes dominated by animal communities. The animal communities that thrive here include cup coral, sea-fans, anemones, and sponges. Mobile animals in this environment can include starfish, brittlestars, and sea urchins.

This site may contain examples of peat and clay exposures (subject to analysis of further data gathered in March 2014). These unique and fragile habitats are irreplaceable, arising from former lake bed sediments and ancient forested peatland or 'submerged forests.' They provide habitats to a range of species including burrowing piddocks, a clam like animal.

Ocean quahog is also found within the site, often entirely buried in the sand with a small tube extending to the surface for breathing and feeding.

What this site would protect

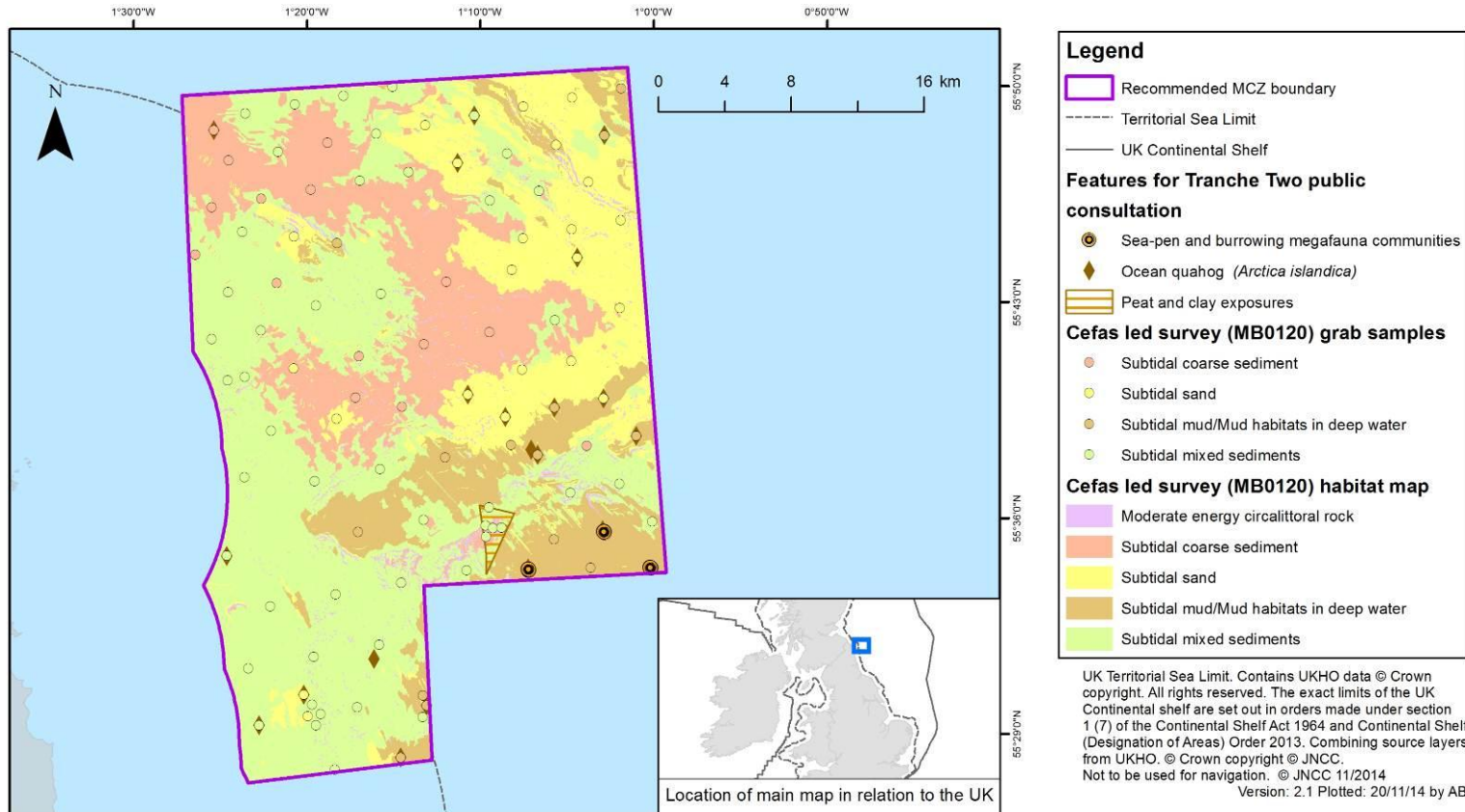
Designation would protect the following features. You can read more about the features this site protects and why they are important [here](#).

Feature	General management approach
Moderate energy circalittoral rock	Maintain at favourable condition
Subtidal coarse sediment	
Subtidal sand	
Subtidal mixed sediments	
Peat and clay exposures ¹	
Subtidal mud	Recover to favourable condition
Mud habitats in deep water	
Sea-pen and burrowing megafauna communities	
Ocean quahog (<i>Arctica islandica</i>)	

¹ additional evidence is being analysed for this feature

Where the features are located

The following map shows 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](#).



The sea-pen and burrowing megafauna communities data points were taken on the Cefas survey in 2012. The ocean quahog data points were taken from a sample from the International Bottom Trawl Survey in 2009 and grab samples from the Cefas survey in 2010 and 2012. The extent of peat and clay exposures was mapped by a Net Gain stakeholder during a steering group meeting in 2011. The Cefas led survey grab samples were taken on the Cefas survey in 2012 and the habitat map was derived from analysis of the acoustic data and ground-truthing data collected on this survey. More detailed advice available from the JNCC advice documents found here: <http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-6658>

Features that are not proposed for designation

Smelt (*Osmerus eperlanus*) is not proposed for designation as there is currently insufficient supporting evidence. Inclusion of this feature may be considered if scientific evidence becomes available.

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
UK commercial fishing	Scallop dredging, bottom trawls.	3,600
Non-UK commercial fishing	Fleets from France and the Netherlands	
Best estimate total cost		3,600

UK commercial fishing

Vessels from over 12 UK ports are known to be active within this site, mainly under 15 metre fishing vessels.

The 40 km² of subtidal mud at the south-eastern corner of the rMCZ marks the northern end of the Farnes Deep and is a place where species targeted by commercial fisheries concentrate. The subtidal mud is an important area for cod and nephrops.

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

- bottom trawls - targeting species including cod, haddock, lemon sole, plaice, nephrops and whiting,
- dredges - mainly targeting scallops,
- pots and creels - the site is most heavily fished by creeling vessels targeting lobster, crab and prawn.

Management of towed gear may be required due to the sensitivity of the features recommended for protection.

Non-UK commercial fishing

The Netherlands, Germany, France and Belgium all have vessels with historical fishing rights for herring within the area of the site that lies between 6 nm and 12 nm offshore.

The following activities are known to take place within the site:

- France - mobile gears (active and seines),
- Netherlands - gears unknown.

Management of static and towed gear may be required due to the sensitivity of the features recommended for protection.

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.

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:

- power and telecommunication cables currently intersect the site,
- commercial fisheries -
 - hooks and lines,
 - nets,
 - mid water trawls,
- recreational -
 - boating,
 - angling,
- renewable energy,
- transit of ships.

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 JNCC, please visit

<http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-6658>

For further information, please contact Defra on

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