

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

Fulmar

Recommended Marine Conservation Zone

January 2015

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

Ocean quahog (*Arctica islandica*) © Paul Kay



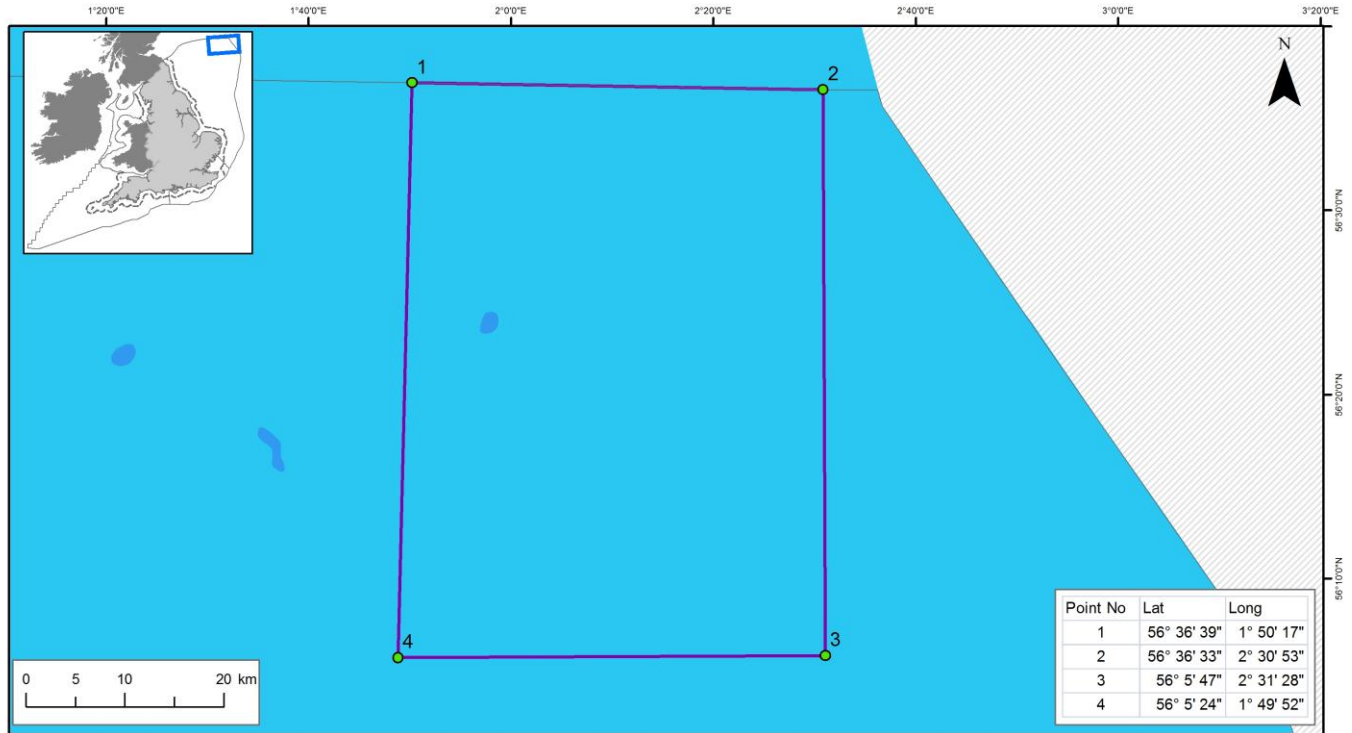
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Where the site is located

Fulmar recommended Marine Conservation Zone (rMCZ) is an offshore site located approximately 224 km from the Northumberland coast.

The site covers an area of 2,437 km² and ranges in depth from 50 to 100 metres.



Fulmar rMCZ

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

Depth Areas (metres)

- 0.0 - 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
- Outside of UKHO bathymetry dataset

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Map Projection: WGS84UTM31N, Inset: BNG

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 Fulmar rMCZ is composed of subtidal mud and subtidal sand, with some mixed sediment patches. The sediments provide a stable habitat, supporting a diverse range of marine life. Sand and gravel habitats in the North Sea are often characterised by the presence of venus clam communities. Designating subtidal mixed sediment in this site helps to fill a gap in the network for this feature.

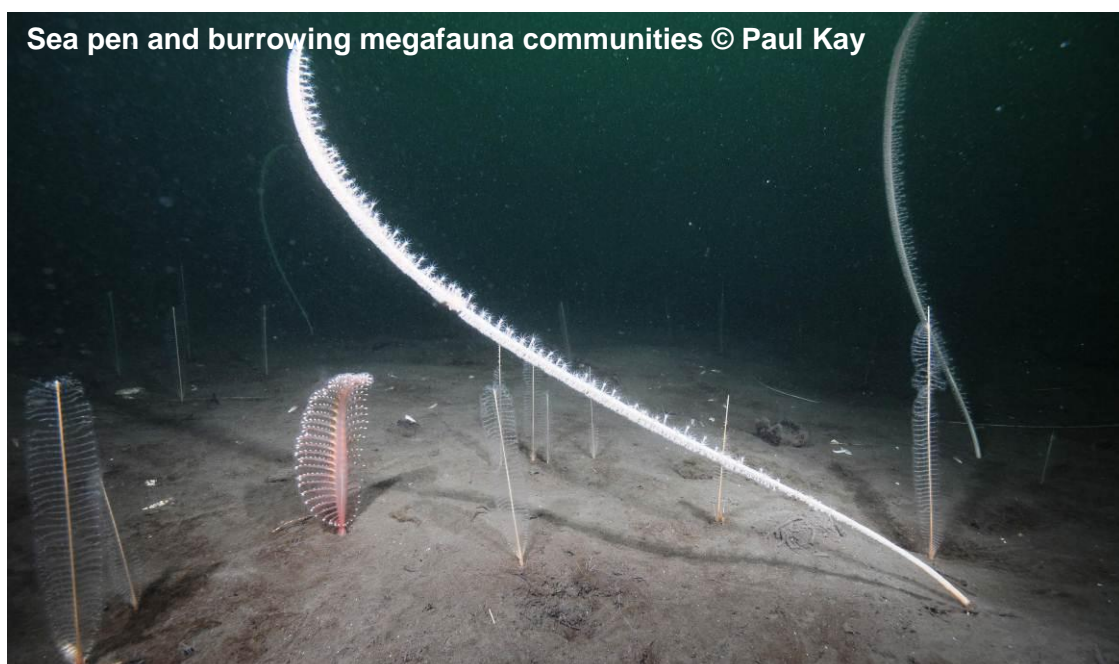
This rMCZ also protects subtidal mud, which is an important habitat for a number of species including worms, cockles, urchins and sea cucumbers. Burrowing anemones and brittlestars can also be found as well as luminous sea-pens which protrude from the surface of the mud. Ocean quahog is also found within the site, often entirely buried in the sand with a small tube extending to the surface for breathing and feeding.

The site also supports foraging sea birds, fulmar and northern gannet.

What this site would protect

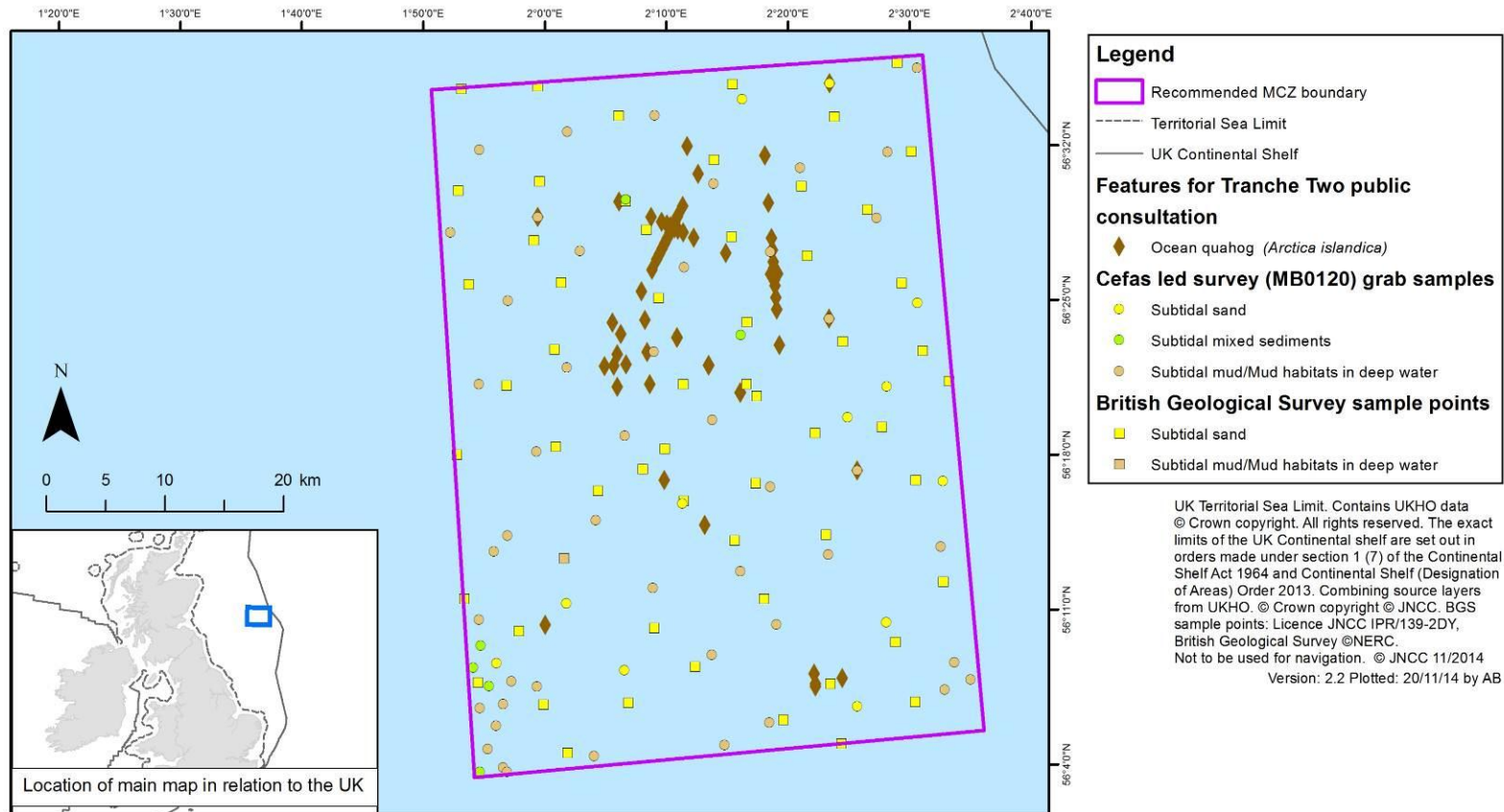
Designation would protect the following features. You can read more about the features this site protects and why they are important [here](#).

Feature	General management approach
Subtidal sand	Maintain at favourable condition
Subtidal mixed sediments	
Subtidal mud	
Mud habitats in deep water	
Ocean quahog (<i>Arctica islandica</i>)	



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](#).



Ocean quahog samples come from a variety of sources: the North Sea International Bottom Trawl surveys 2007-2011, grab samples from the Cefas surveys in 2010 and 2012, data collected for the Defra MB0102 contract and historical data reconstructed from museum collections. The Cefas led survey grab samples were taken during the Cefas survey in 2012. British Geological Survey samples were taken between 1975-1981. Only a modelled habitat map exists for this site and due to new data gathered in 2012 that conflict with this map, it is not displayed here to avoid confusion over habitat extents. 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

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:

- native oyster (*Ostrea edulis*),
- amphipod shrimp (*Gitanopsis bispinosa*),
- undulate ray (*Raja undulate*),
- smelt (*Osmerus eperlanus*),
- subtidal coarse sediment.

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
Oil and gas	Future development	Unquantified at site level
Best estimate total cost		Unquantified

Oil and gas

This rMCZ intersects with several oil and gas blocks and zones. If these are further developed for oil and gas extraction, developers would need to take into account the impact of the development on the features in the site. This would increase the cost of the Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) involved in licence application. As a result of uncertainty about whether any future development will take place in this location, costs for the oil and gas sector have not been quantified at site level.

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:

- one active telecommunication cable, gas pipes and 15 active oil pipes are known to intersect the site,
- UK commercial fisheries – all gear types,
- non-UK commercial fisheries,
- 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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