

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

Norris to Ryde

**Candidate Marine Conservation Zone not
proposed for designation in the second tranche**

January 2015

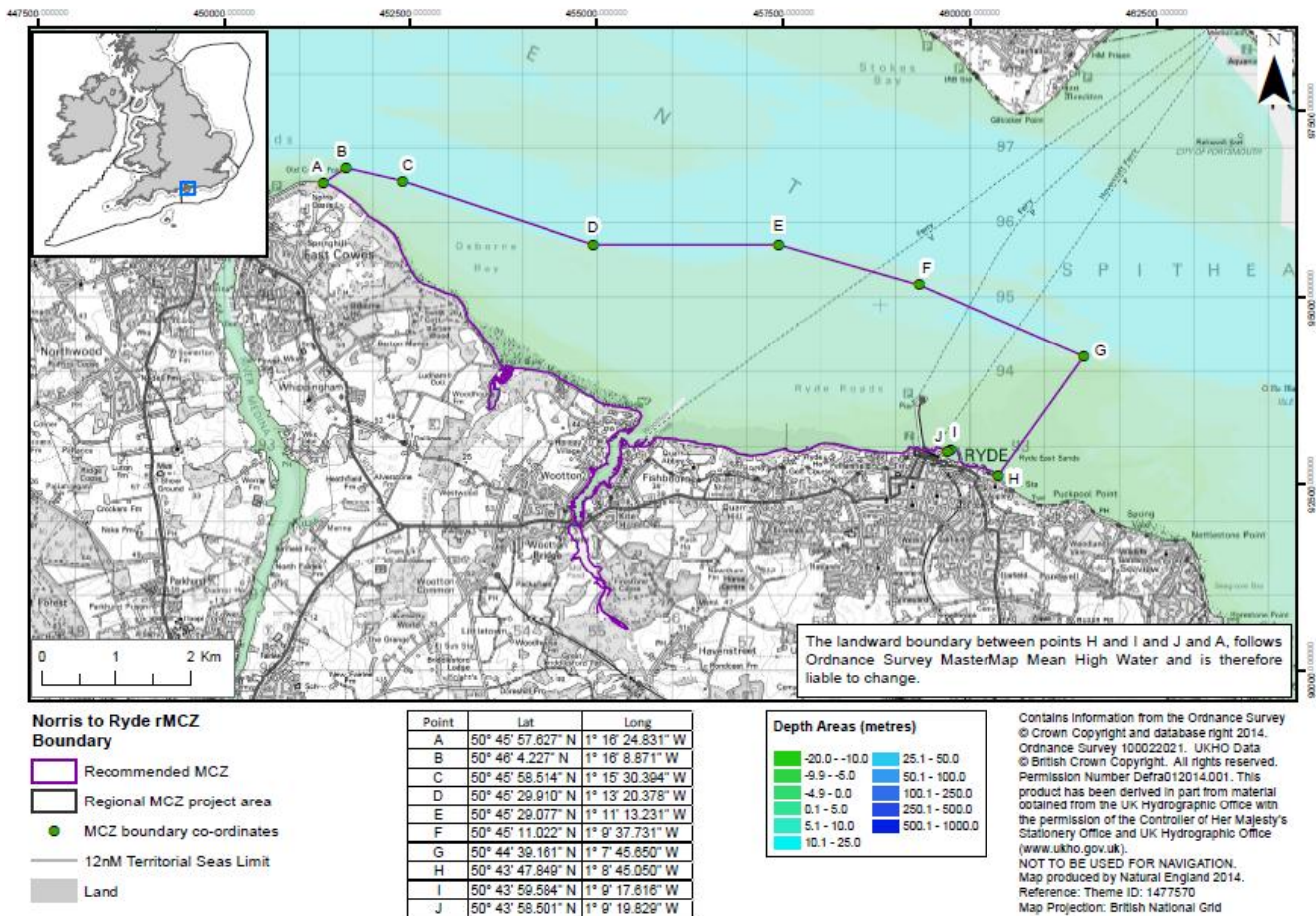
**Consultation on Sites Proposed for Designation in the Second Tranche
of Marine Conservation Zones**

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Where this site is located

Norris to Ryde candidate Marine Conservation Zone (cMCZ) is an inshore site measuring 20 km². The site covers the southern stretch of the Solent adjacent to the northeast coast of the Isle of Wight, stretching from just north of Norris Castle to the widest part of Ryde Sands.



Why this site was identified as a candidate for the second tranche

The main feature of the site is its subtidal mud, which extends almost throughout the site and is considered to be the best example of this habitat in the region. Other important features of this site include sheltered muddy gravel and mixed sediment. Extensive areas of seagrass occur along the greater part of the foreshore and seashore and are considered to be one of the best examples in the Solent. At the neck of Wootton Creek, the Old Mill Pond contains the highest density of tentacled lagoon worm in the region, which is considered to be the best example in the country.

Features considered for designation

The features considered for designation in this site were:

- low energy intertidal rock,
- estuarine rocky habitats,
- subtidal mixed sediments,
- subtidal macrophyte-dominated sediment,
- subtidal coarse sediment,
- subtidal sand,
- peat and clay exposures,
- subtidal mud,
- sheltered muddy gravels,
- seagrass beds,
- native oysters (*Ostrea edulis*),
- tentacled lagoon worm (*Alkmaria romijni*).

Effects of designation

If the cMCZ was to be designated in its current form, the following activities would likely be affected by management. This information will be updated if a revised site proposal is recommended for designation at a later date.

Sector	Best Cost Estimate (£) per year	Details
Recreational activities	77,900	Approximately 36 yachting and sailing clubs and other recreational organisations operate in the cMCZ to anchor and the area is regularly used by recreational sea anglers and by charter boat operators for angling. Most anchoring takes place in the west of the area, and the level of activity is very high. Osborne Bay is thought to be one of the best sea grass beds around the island and a prime area for sea grass to flourish. It is also a popular recreational anchoring area due to its sheltered nature and picturesque setting, with up to 50–150 boats using it at weekends in summer. This is also an overspill area for vessels attending Cowes Week. Local clubs lay racing marks within the area of seagrass for one week each year.

UK commercial fishing	3,900	Vessels that fish in the area are mainly from Cowes and Portsmouth/Gosport. Oyster dredging gear is known to be used within the site, although this has declined in recent years. Pots, nets and lines are also used within the site. Cuttlefish trapping is currently the most financially valuable activity in the site. There is some potting, trawling and long lining activity but little set netting. About four vessels operate in the area at any one time.
Ports, harbours and shipping	12,800	<p>There are four ports and harbours within 5 km of the site that may undergo development in the future: Cowes, Fishbourne, Newport and Ryde.</p> <p>There is one site (Ryde Harbour) within 1 km of the site which is licensed for the disposal of channel dredge material, used by the ports of Southampton, Portsmouth and Ryde.</p> <p>The main navigational channels for Ryde and Fishbourne lie within the site and are subject to maintenance dredging.</p> <p>All future licence applications made in relation to port, harbour and commercial shipping activities would need to consider the possible effects of their activities on the features designated within the site. It is likely that there would be additional costs incurred when carrying out Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) for future licence applications.</p>
Oil and gas	Unquantified at a site specific level	This cMCZ overlaps with an area that has potential for future oil and gas exploration and production. If the site were 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 licence application. As a result of uncertainty about whether any development will take place, costs for the oil and gas sector have not been quantified at site level.
Archaeological heritage	Unquantified	There is likely to be an increase in the cost for carrying out EIAs for future licence applications within this site. Following designation, these will need to consider the effect of the activity on the features designated at this site.
Best estimate total cost	94,500	

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 identified at their current levels of intensity:

- commercial fisheries - mid water trawls,
- flood and coastal defence management,
- transit of ships,
- water abstraction,
- discharge and diffuse pollution.

Why this candidate site is not being proposed for designation in the second tranche

This site would affect a range of sectors if designated. The greatest costs would be to recreational boating (anchoring) with approximately 36 yachting, sailing clubs and recreational organisations using the site. This sector has raised concerns regarding safety issues over potential anchorage restrictions in the sheltered bay which is one of few places around the island offering protection from the strong tidal currents.

This site also includes the passenger ferry terminal which overlaps with the sheltered muddy gravel and is immediately adjacent to the seagrass beds and subtidal sand and gravel features. Consideration could be given to amending the boundary to exclude this and the operational area of the hovercraft service which docks at the Ryde frontage.

This site is an important oyster ground for commercial fisheries, has significant recreational angling and has issues regarding permanent moorings and private ownership within Wootton Creek

We consider that further work is needed to explore the scope for developing local solutions on this site before it can be proposed for designation.

Further consideration

Defra will undertake further discussions regarding boundary alterations and additional information will be gathered ahead of consideration in the third tranche.

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>

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PB 14268