

South Rigg

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

January 2015

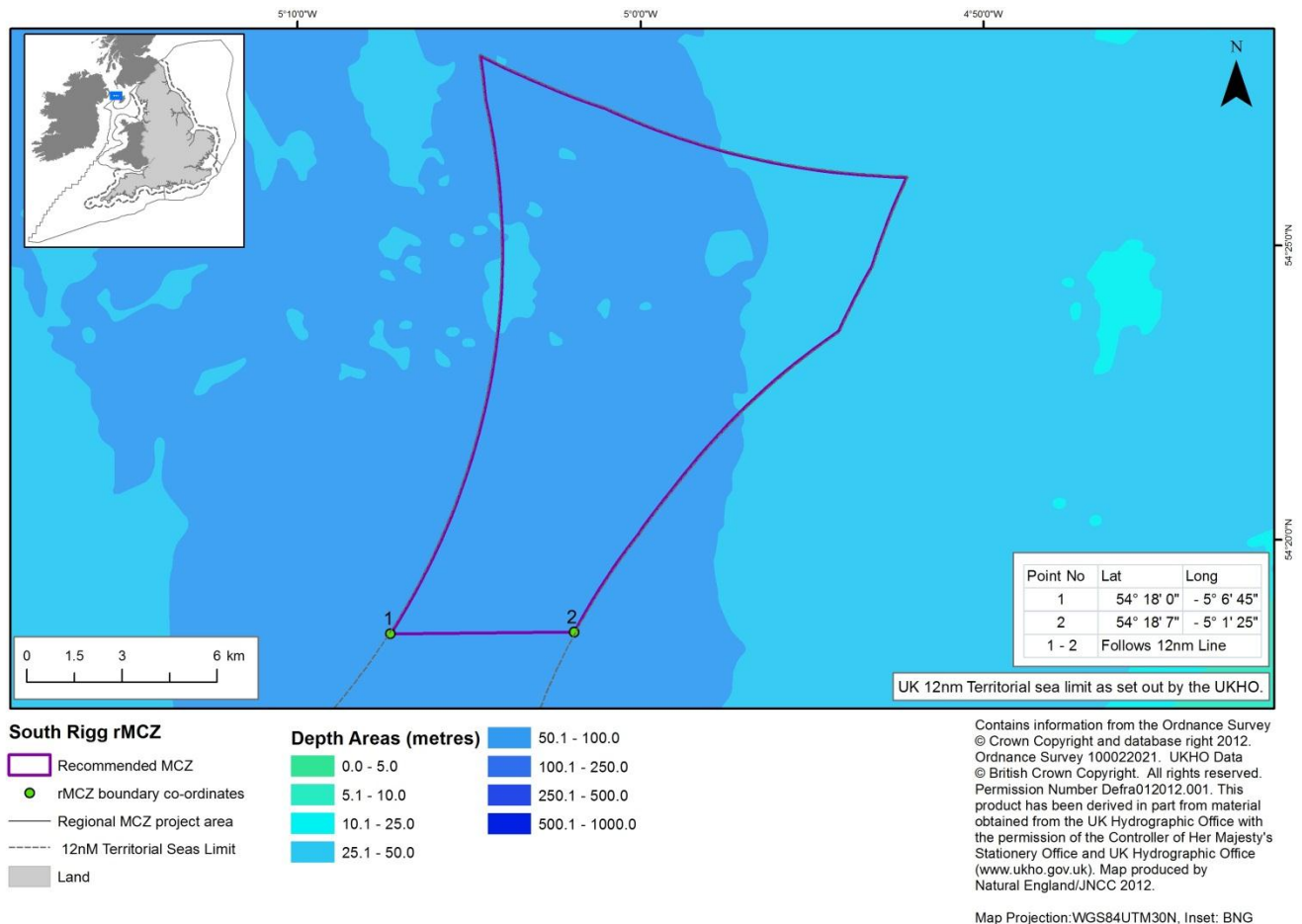
Consultation on Sites Proposed for Designation in the Second Tranche of Marine Conservation Zones

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Where this site is located

The South Rigg candidate Marine Conservation Zone (cMCZ) is located in the western Irish Sea between three different territorial seas: Northern Ireland waters to the west, Scottish waters to the north and the Isle of Man waters to the east. The depth of the seabed in the site ranges from 50 to 150 metres.



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

The site was recommended to fill gaps in the network for subtidal sand, subtidal mud, mud habitats in deep water, and sea-pen and burrowing megafauna communities. This site also contains bedrock outcrops and reef habitats which support a range of species including sea anemones, brittlestars and bryozoans, moss-like animals which in large numbers form a seabed turf. The long-lived bivalve Ocean Quahog is also found within the site.

Features considered for designation

The features considered for designation in this site were:

- moderate energy circalittoral rock,
- low energy circalittoral rock,
- subtidal mud,
- mud habitats in deep water,
- subtidal sand,
- subtidal mixed sediments,
- sea-pen and burrowing megafauna communities,
- ocean quahog (*Arctica islandica*).

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
UK Commercial fishing	22,900	There are a number of vessels known to fish within this site and it is an important nephrops fishery for the Northern Ireland fleet. The following gear types are in use: dredges, bottom trawls, and hooks and lines.
Archaeological heritage	Unquantified	Two wrecks are recorded in the site. There is likely to be an increase in the cost for carrying out Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) for future licence applications within this site.
National defence	Unquantified	The Ministry of Defence is known to make use of the site for training activities. We expect this activity to be able to continue. Activity which is harmful to features can be avoided though additional planning during operations and training.
Ports, harbours and shipping	Unquantified	There is one disposal site within 5 km of the site. No licence applications were received for this site between 2001 and 2010 but it is not closed to disposal in the future. The EIA for future licence applications to use the disposal site within 5 km of boundary of this site is likely to incur additional costs.
Best estimate total cost	22,900	

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:

- recreation,
- transit of ships,
- cables - three active power cables intersect this site.

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

This site is located with an important fishing ground and designation could have a significant impact on the fishing sector, particularly in Northern Ireland. The fishing sector is in the process of developing alternative site proposals for protecting subtidal mud habitats in this region. We will consider all available options in the third tranche.

Further consideration

Further work is being carried out with the fishing industry and other interested parties to review options to protect subtidal mud in the region, with the aim that suitable sites will be considered 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 JNCC, please visit

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

For further information, please contact Defra on

- 03459 33 55 77 (UK only)
- +44 20 7238 6951 (from outside the UK)
- defra.helpline@defra.gsi.gov.uk



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