



BY EMAIL ONLY

28 October 2020

Dear stakeholder,

Call for evidence on the MMO draft assessment of marine non-licensable activity impacts and potential management options for the Studland Bay Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ)

The Marine Management Organisation (MMO) is seeking additional evidence and views on our draft assessment of the impacts of marine non-licensable activity on the conservation objectives of Studland Bay MCZ, and potential management options.

This letter provides a background to the MCZ and the role of the MMO, a brief summary of known marine non-licensable activity in the site, a range of potential management options being considered, supplementary information, and information on how to respond to the call for evidence and what to expect next.

'Marine non-licensable activities' are activities that do not require a marine licence, and also does not include fishing activities. Examples of marine non-licensable activities include use of motorised and non-motorised watercraft and recreational diving. Under section 66 of Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009¹, installation of moorings may require a marine licence as they are 'deposits on the seabed'. This means installation of moorings is a licensable activity. The MMO has decided to include mooring in this assessment due to the potential risks of this activity to achieving the conservation objectives of the site. Any management put in place for mooring would work alongside the marine licensing process.

Background

Studland Bay MCZ was formally designated on 31 May 2019². The site has four designated features:

¹ Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 (section 66) www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2009/23/section/66

² Ministerial order 2019 No 45. Available online at:
www.legislation.gov.uk/ukmo/2019/45/pdfs/ukmo_20190045_en.pdf



- Intertidal coarse sediment
- Long-snouted seahorse (*Hippocampus guttulatus*)
- Subtidal sand
- Seagrass beds

A map showing Studland Bay MCZ and the location of the features is provided at the end of this letter.

The conservation objectives set for the features of Studland Bay MCZ are set out in the site's designation order³ and are that protected habitats:

- are maintained in favourable condition if they are already in favourable condition; and
- be brought into favourable condition if they are not already in favourable condition.

Natural England advises a combination of 'maintain' and 'restore' targets for different attributes of the site's features⁴.

Maritime boundaries

The Studland Bay MCZ lies within the 6 nautical mile limit in English waters.

Summary of marine non-licensable activity within the site

Initial analysis of marine non-licensable activity data indicates that the main activities occurring within Studland Bay MCZ are powerboating or sailing with an engine (including launching, recovery, participation, anchoring and mooring), sailing without an engine (including launching, recovery, participation, anchoring and mooring), recreational diving and snorkelling and non-motorised watercraft (e.g. kayaks, windsurfing, dinghies).

Further analysis of marine non-licensable activity within the site is available in the draft Studland Bay Marine Conservation Zone MMO Non-licensable Activity Assessment.

Draft MMO assessment

The draft MMO assessment of marine non-licensable activity impacts at this site, taking into account advice from Natural England and best available evidence, has determined that the subtidal sand feature is sensitive to impacts from mooring and anchoring (all vessels); the seagrass bed feature is sensitive to impacts from mooring and anchoring (all vessels) and powerboating and sailing with an engine and long-snouted seahorse are sensitive to impacts from mooring and anchoring (all vessels) and powerboating and

³ The Studland Bay MCZ designation order
www.legislation.gov.uk/ukmo/2019/45/created

⁴ Natural England Supplementary Advice on Conservation Objectives
<https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/Marine/SupAdvice.aspx?SiteCode=UKMCZ0072&SiteName=studland&SiteNameDisplay=Studland+Bay+MCZ&countyCode=&responsiblePerson=&SeaArea=&IFCAArea=&NumMarineSeasonality>



sailing with/without an engine.

It is therefore MMO's current opinion that the conservation objectives for these features may not be achieved due to their vulnerability to these activities.

Management of marine non-licensable activity may therefore be required to support the achievement of the conservation objectives for the MCZ.

The purpose of this call for evidence is to seek additional evidence and views to inform the draft assessment and the associated management options.

Management Options

The focus of this call for evidence is ensuring that the draft assessments are based on the best available evidence. The introduction of any management measures will be subject to a separate process, including appropriate levels of consultation.

We are currently considering the following potential management options to further the site's conservation objectives:

Management options for anchoring

Option 1: No additional management. Introduce a monitoring and control plan within the site

This monitoring and control plan would be introduced to understand levels of activity and potential impacts on the protected features. From this plan it would be ascertained whether further management measures are required.

Option 2: Voluntary no anchor zones

This option would involve boat users voluntarily avoiding specified areas to drop anchors.

Option 3: No anchor zones

This option would involve boat users being prohibited to drop anchor in specified areas via an MMO byelaw.

Option 4: Prohibition of anchoring

This option would involve boat users being prohibited to drop anchor within the whole MCZ via an MMO byelaw.

At this time, we do not believe that management option 1 is sufficient to protect Studland Bay MCZ due to the levels of anchoring activity occurring at the site as well as the evidence for the damage caused by anchoring on the features of the site.

Management options for mooring

Option 1: No additional management. Introduce a monitoring and control plan within the site.

This monitoring and control plan would be introduced to understand levels of activity and potential impacts on the protected features. From this plan it would be ascertained whether



further management measures are required.

Option 2: Voluntary use of advanced mooring systems for mooring applications

This option would involve marine licence applications for new moorings voluntarily installing advanced mooring systems that have minimal impact on the seabed.

Option 3: Prohibit use of ‘traditional moorings’, only allow use of advanced mooring systems

This option would involve prohibiting use of ‘traditional moorings’ (for example, standard swing or trot moorings). Only the use of advanced moorings systems would be allowed, with installation subject to a marine licence application.

Option 4: No mooring zones

This option would involve boat users being prohibited to moor in specified areas via an MMO byelaw.

Option 5: Prohibition of mooring

This option would involve the prohibition of moorings within the MCZ via an MMO byelaw.

At this time, we do not believe that management option 1 is sufficient to protect Studland Bay MCZ due to the evidence for the damage caused by mooring systems on the features of the site.

Management options for powerboating or sailing with an engine (launching and recovery, participation)

Option 1: No additional management. Introduce a monitoring and control plan within the site

This monitoring and control plan would be introduced to understand levels of activity and potential impacts on the protected features. From this plan it would be ascertained whether further management measures are required.

Option 2: Voluntary speed restrictions within the MCZ

This option would involve voluntary speed restriction for powerboats and sailing boats with engines within the MCZ in order reduce the levels of underwater noise.

Option 3: Speed restrictions within the MCZ

This option would involve implementing speed restriction for powerboats and sailing boats with engines within the MCZ in order reduce the levels of underwater noise.

Option 4: Prohibition of powerboats and sailing boats with an engine within the MCZ

This option would prohibit the use of powerboats and sailing boats with an engine within the MCZ.



Management options for sailing without an engine (launching and recovery, participation)

Option 1: No additional management. Introduce a monitoring and control plan within the site

This monitoring and control plan would be introduced to understand levels of activity and potential impacts on the protected features. From this plan it would be ascertained whether further management measures are required.

Option 2: Prohibition of sailing boats without an engine within the MCZ

This option would prohibit the use of sailing boats without an engine within the MCZ.

Management options for recreational diving and snorkelling

Option 1: No additional management. Introduce a monitoring and control plan within the site

This monitoring and control plan would be introduced to understand levels of activity and potential impacts on the protected features. From this plan it would be ascertained whether further management measures are required.

Option 2: Introduce code of conduct for recreational diving and snorkelling within the MCZ

This option would involve introducing a code of conduct for diving and snorkelling activities within the MCZ, communicated, for example through signage and public guidance.

Option 3: Prohibition of recreational diving and snorkelling within the seagrass feature of the MCZ

This option would prohibit recreational diving and snorkelling within the MCZ.

Questions to consider

Please provide us with any information you feel could be relevant to inform our decision for management at this site. In particular we are interested in understanding the following:

- Do you have information about the location, condition or sensitivity of the designated features?
- Do you have information about the level or nature of marine non-licensable activity within the site? We are particularly interested in anchoring, use of moorings, vessel use and recreational diving and snorkelling.
- How would each of the proposed management options affect you? (Please provide evidence of this impact if possible)
- What other effects will each of the proposed management options have?
- With regard to management options 2 and 3 for anchoring, to achieve the conservation objectives of the site:
 - What proportion and/or which parts of the site should be subject to no anchor zones (voluntary or otherwise)? Where possible, please provide the evidence and/or rationale for your answer.



- With regard to management option 4 for mooring, to achieve the conservation objectives of the site:
 - What proportion and/or which parts of the site should be subject to no mooring zones? Where possible, please provide the evidence and/or rationale for your answer.

Questionnaire - Information on the type and level of activities at Studland Bay MCZ

To support evidence gathering, we also invite you to complete a questionnaire on some of the marine non-licensable activities occurring in Studland Bay, so the MMO can gain a better understanding of the type and level of activities occurring. The questionnaire is optional but we would really appreciate your input.

How we will consider new evidence

We always seek to use the best available evidence to inform our decisions.

The purpose of this call for evidence is to provide an opportunity for stakeholders to provide additional evidence to inform our assessment and, where necessary, development of management measures.

It is important that we understand the strengths and limitations of any evidence in order to understand how it can contribute to our decision making.

Any evidence received will therefore be assessed in accordance with the MMO evidence quality assurance process⁵.

How to respond

There are two parts to the Studland Bay MCZ call for evidence:

- Questions to consider; and
- A questionnaire - Information on the type and level of activities at Studland Bay MCZ.

Please respond no later than **15 December 2020**. You can respond by completing our online survey by visiting: <https://consult.defra.gov.uk/mmo/call-for-evidence-mmo-mpa-assessments>

If you are not able to access the above survey, you can respond via the details below. Due to the current COVID-19 situation we are asking all stakeholders to use email rather than post if possible.

By email: conservation@marinemanagement.org.uk

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https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/921894/qa-evidenceprocess002.pdf



By telephone: 0300 123 1032

In writing:

Studland Bay MCZ call for evidence
Marine Conservation Team
Marine Management Organisation
Lancaster House
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE4 7YH

Next steps

We will use the information received during this call for evidence, alongside other information (including analysis of academic literature and non-licensable activity data), to update and finalise our assessment and develop formal marine non-licensable activity management proposals for this site.

If we believe that management measures are required, we will identify the most appropriate way to implement these and take steps, including further consultation, accordingly.

More information on the MMO byelaw making process can be found at www.gov.uk/guidance/marine-conservation-byelaws

If you wish to be alerted once this consultation is launched, or if you have any further questions or queries, please email conservation@marinemanagement.org.uk or call the MMO helpline on: 0300 123 1032.

Yours faithfully,

MMO Marine Conservation Team

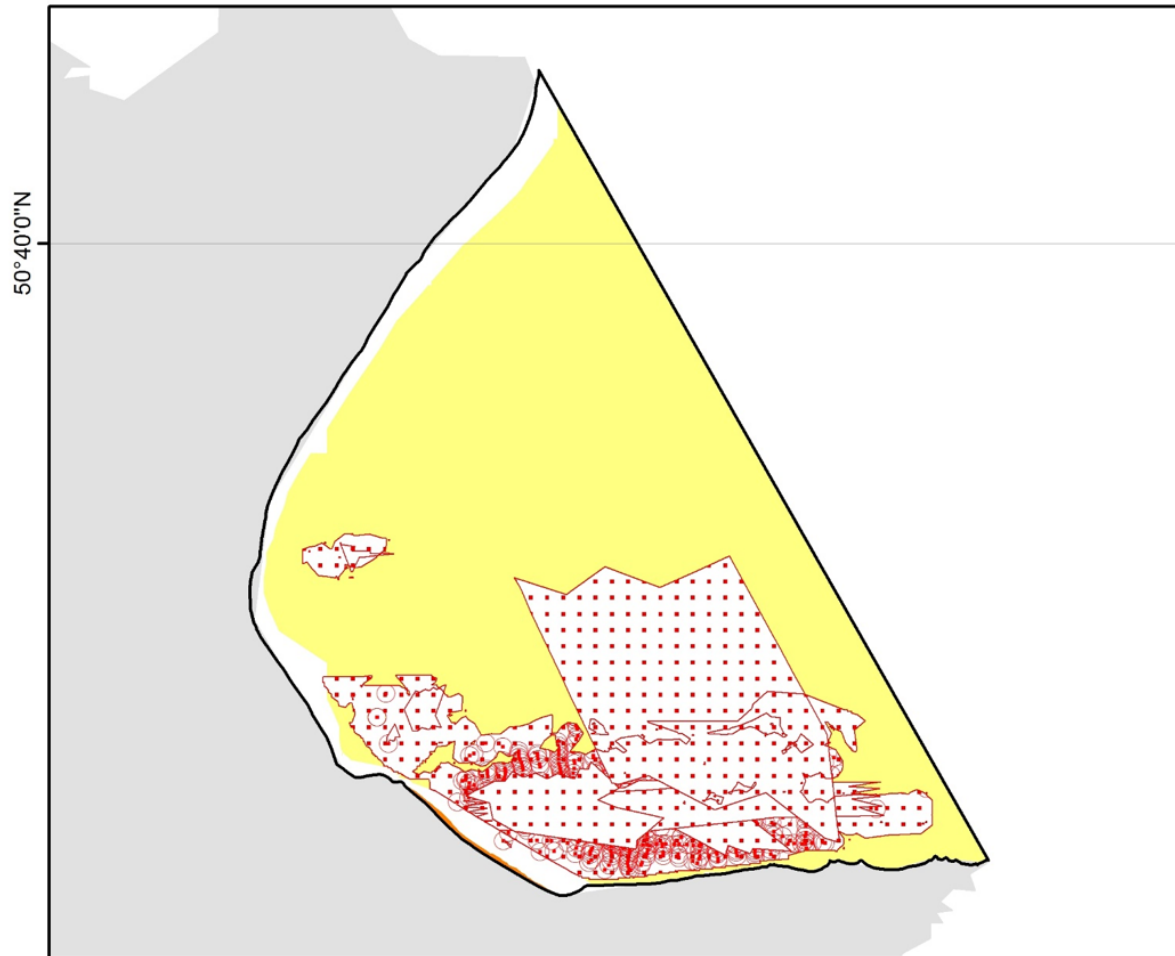




Marine
Management
Organisation

Studland Bay Marine Conservation Zone

Designated Features



Studland Bay MCZ

HOCI

Seagrass beds
(HOCI 17)

Seagrass beds
(HOCI 17)

Broadscale Habitat

Intertidal coarse
sediment (A2.1)

Subtidal sand (A5.2)

Due to sensitivities the locations of long-snouted seahorse
(*Hippocampus guttulatus*) have not been plotted in this
figure.

Date: 01/10/2020

Coordinate System: GCS ETRS 1989

Datum: ETRS 1989

Units: Degree



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