



South Dorset Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ) proposed MMO byelaw: Information sheet

Summary

The Marine Management Organisation is proposing a byelaw to protect the designated habitats of the South Dorset Marine Conservation Zone. The proposed byelaw will prohibit the use of bottom towed fishing gear throughout the MCZ.

South Dorset MCZ is one of 40 sites in English offshore waters that contribute to the UK Blue Belt of protected areas. It is located 18 km south of St Albans Head on the Dorset coast, and covers 193 km².

Why these management measures matter

South Dorset MCZ is home to biologically diverse habitats, including rocky seabed which supports a variety of species including bryozoans, sponges, ascidians, decapods and worms. The MCZ also contains the only known subtidal chalk habitat within the south-west region, which occurs in a mosaic with rock and sediment across the site. The chalk seabed provides shelter for a diverse community of piddocks and worms whose bore holes provide habitats for other creatures. Coarse sediment is present in approximately half of the MCZ, and can provide a nursery ground for commercially important fish species including sea bass, sole and plaice, as well as sand eels, which are an important food source for seabirds such as puffins, razorbills and guillemots.



Plaice (left) puffins with sandeels (right) ©1134991400, 453543851 iStock

Effects of these management measures

The proposed measures will protect these fragile habitats and will provide a safe haven for juvenile fish to grow, which may contribute to commercial fish stocks in neighbouring areas.

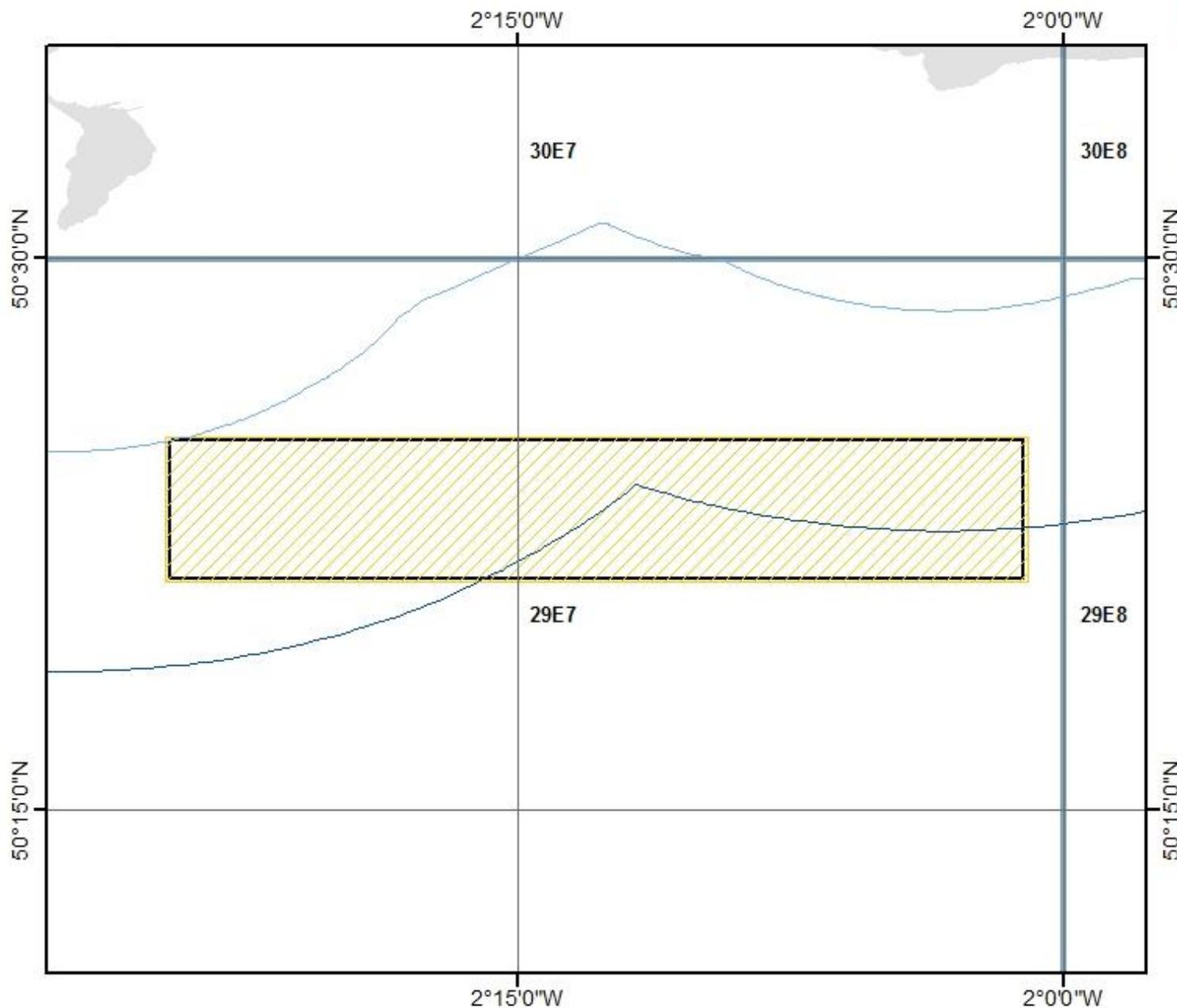
We have estimated that these measures will have a financial impact to UK fishers who fish in the area using bottom towed gears of approximately £3,300 per year. The MMO is taking a proportionate management approach to protect and enhance our marine ecosystems and secure a more sustainable future for coastal communities, the fishing industry and future generations.

For more information about South Dorset MCZ and its designated habitats please see the [South Dorset MCZ factsheet](#) and the [JNCC Site Information Centre](#).



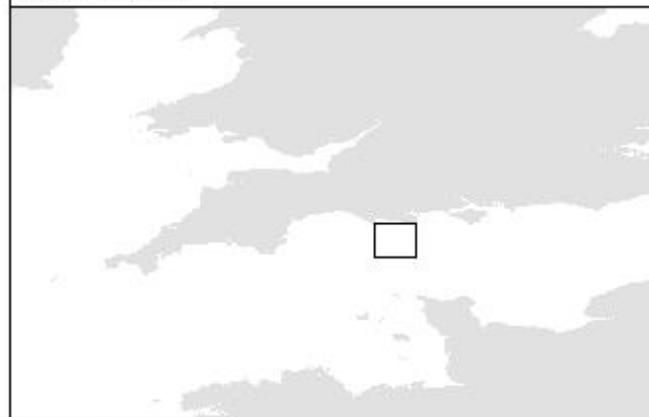


The South Dorset Marine Conservation Zone (Specified Area) Bottom Towed Fishing Gear Byelaw 2021



- 6 Nautical Mile Limit (1983) (UKHO)
- 12 Nautical Mile Limit (1983) (UKHO)
- ICES Statistical Rectangles
- South Dorset MCZ
- Specified area (bottom towed fishing prohibited)

Date: 21/01/2021
 Coordinate System: GCS WGS 1984
 Datum: WGS 1984
 Units: Degree



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