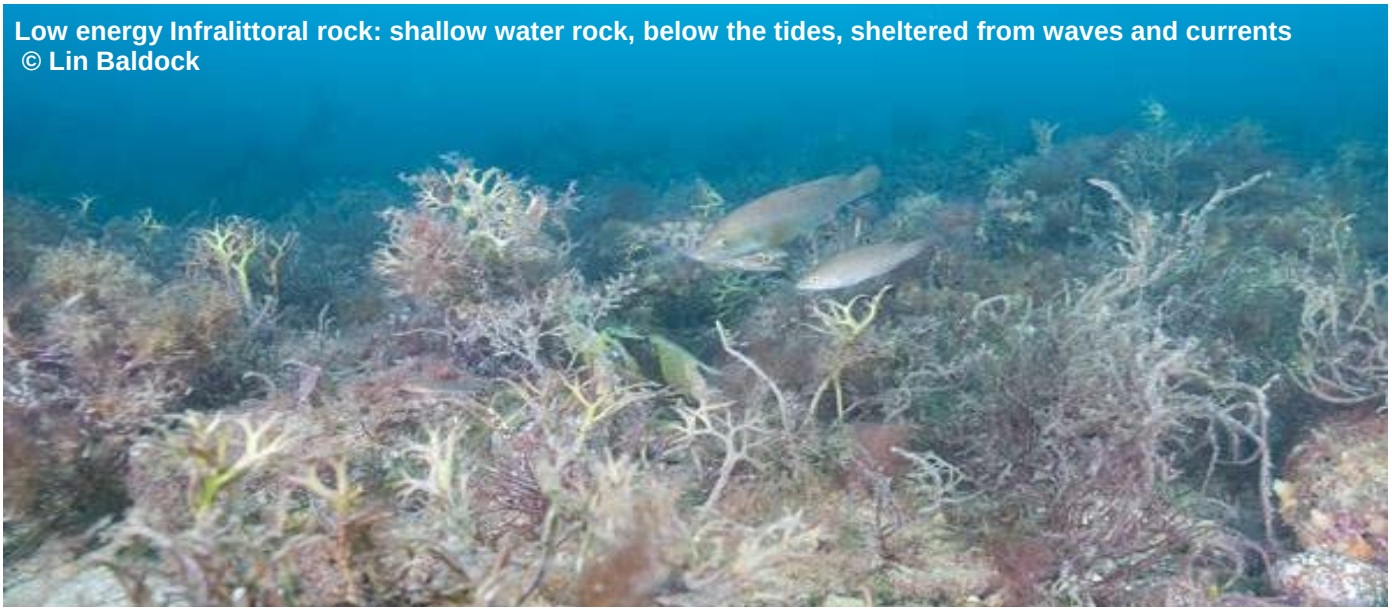
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

Bideford to Foreland Point Marine Conservation Zone

This document sets out why this site is important, the features protected and general management information.

17 January 2016


Low energy Infralittoral rock: shallow water rock, below the tides, sheltered from waves and currents
© Lin Baldock

Overview

This site becomes a Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ) in January 2016. This means that specific features within this area are protected and, where necessary, regulators will manage marine activities.

Where is the site

Bideford to Foreland Point MCZ is an inshore site located on the coast of north Devon in the south west of England. The site covers an area of 104 km².

Why it's important

MCZs, together with other types of marine protected areas, will form the UK contribution to an international network of protected sites in the north east Atlantic. The network will help to deliver the government's vision of clean, healthy, safe, productive and biologically diverse oceans and seas. MCZs protect typical, rare or declining habitats and species found in our seas.

This site protects a wide range of habitats, from beaches of intertidal sand, which are exposed to the air at low tide and below water at high tide, to subtidal sediment and rock habitats, which are permanently submerged. This site is important for creating connectivity between sites along the north coast of Devon and Cornwall.

This MCZ helps to fill a gap in the network for honeycomb worm reefs, which are formed from the closely-packed sand tubes constructed by these colonial worms. The reef structures resemble honeycomb and can extend for tens of metres across and up to a metre tall. They, in turn, are able to support a wide range of shore-dwelling species including anemones, snails, shore crabs and seaweeds.

This site also protects a range of important and vulnerable species such as the pink sea-fan coral which is a slow-growing colony of tiny anemone-like animals. These coral feed on microscopic animals captured from the passing water. Pink sea-fans are themselves home to other creatures including a sea slug and a rare anemone. Dogfish also attach their eggs to pink sea-fans, wrapping the long tendrils at the corners of the 'Mermaid's Purse' eggcase around the sea-fan's branches. This site also protects the spiny lobster, whose common name comes from the sharp spines all over their heavy, orange-brown shells.

Designation of this site as a Marine Conservation Zone protects the following features. You can find detailed explanations of each feature at http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-4527.

Protected features	General management approach
Low energy intertidal rock	Maintain in favourable condition
Moderate energy intertidal rock	Maintain in favourable condition
High energy intertidal rock	Maintain in favourable condition
Intertidal coarse sediment	Maintain in favourable condition
Intertidal mixed sediments	Maintain in favourable condition
Intertidal sand and muddy sand	Maintain in favourable condition
Intertidal underboulder communities	Maintain in favourable condition
Littoral chalk communities	Maintain in favourable condition
Low energy infralittoral rock	Maintain in favourable condition
Moderate energy infralittoral rock	Maintain in favourable condition
High energy infralittoral rock	Maintain in favourable condition
Moderate energy circalittoral rock	Maintain in favourable condition
High energy circalittoral rock	Maintain in favourable condition
Subtidal coarse sediment	Maintain in favourable condition
Subtidal mixed sediments	Maintain in favourable condition
Subtidal sand	Recover to favourable condition
Fragile sponge & anthozoan communities on subtidal rocky habitats	Maintain in favourable condition
Honeycomb worm (*Sabellaria alveolata*) reefs	Maintain in favourable condition
Pink sea-fan (*Eunicella verrucosa*)	Maintain in favourable condition
Spiny lobster (*Palinurus elephas*)	Recover to favourable condition

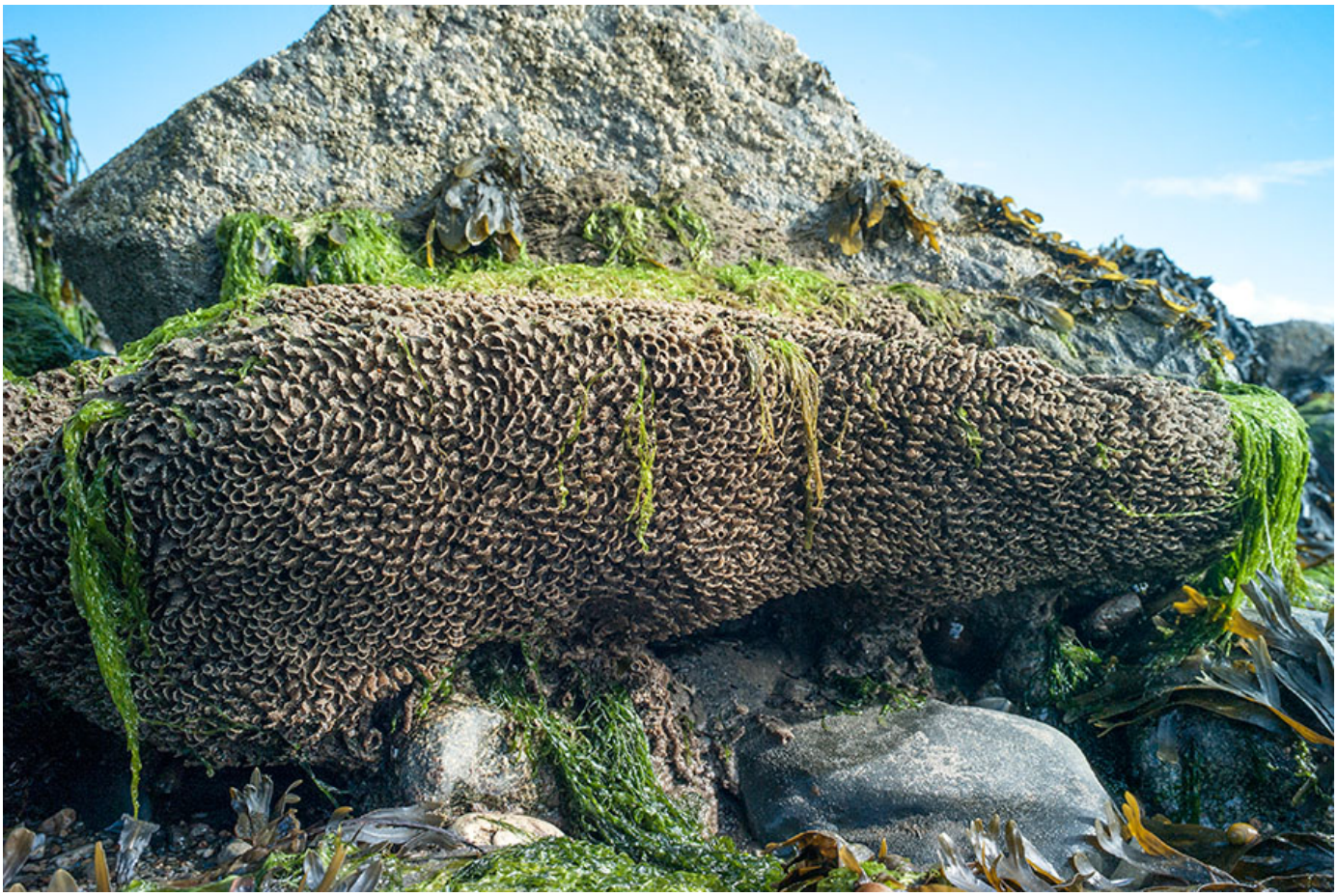
Management of the site

Now that this site has been designated, some activities may need additional management. Activities and the management measures used to regulate them may need to change if new evidence becomes available.

Most marine activity is already regulated by the relevant regulatory bodies. There are existing byelaws, national laws and European Regulations which regulators use to manage fishing, coastal development, recreation and pollution. These also apply in MCZs.

Regulators will manage each site according to the features and activities in, or near, a specific area. Management measures will be implemented at sites most at risk of damage first, regulating only those activities which have a detrimental impact on the designated features. Any management measures that are required for MCZs will be applied on a case-by-case basis.

Management in MCZs can take several different forms, from using existing licensing framework, specific byelaws and orders or an EU Regulation for a site. There has to be public consultation on permanent byelaws and orders. For activities that already need a marine licence, regulators consider the MCZ in their decision as soon as the site is consulted on. Find out more about marine licensing in MCZs at https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/marine-conservation-zones-mczs-and-marine-licensing.



Honeycomb worm (*Sabellaria alveolata*) reefs © Paul Kay

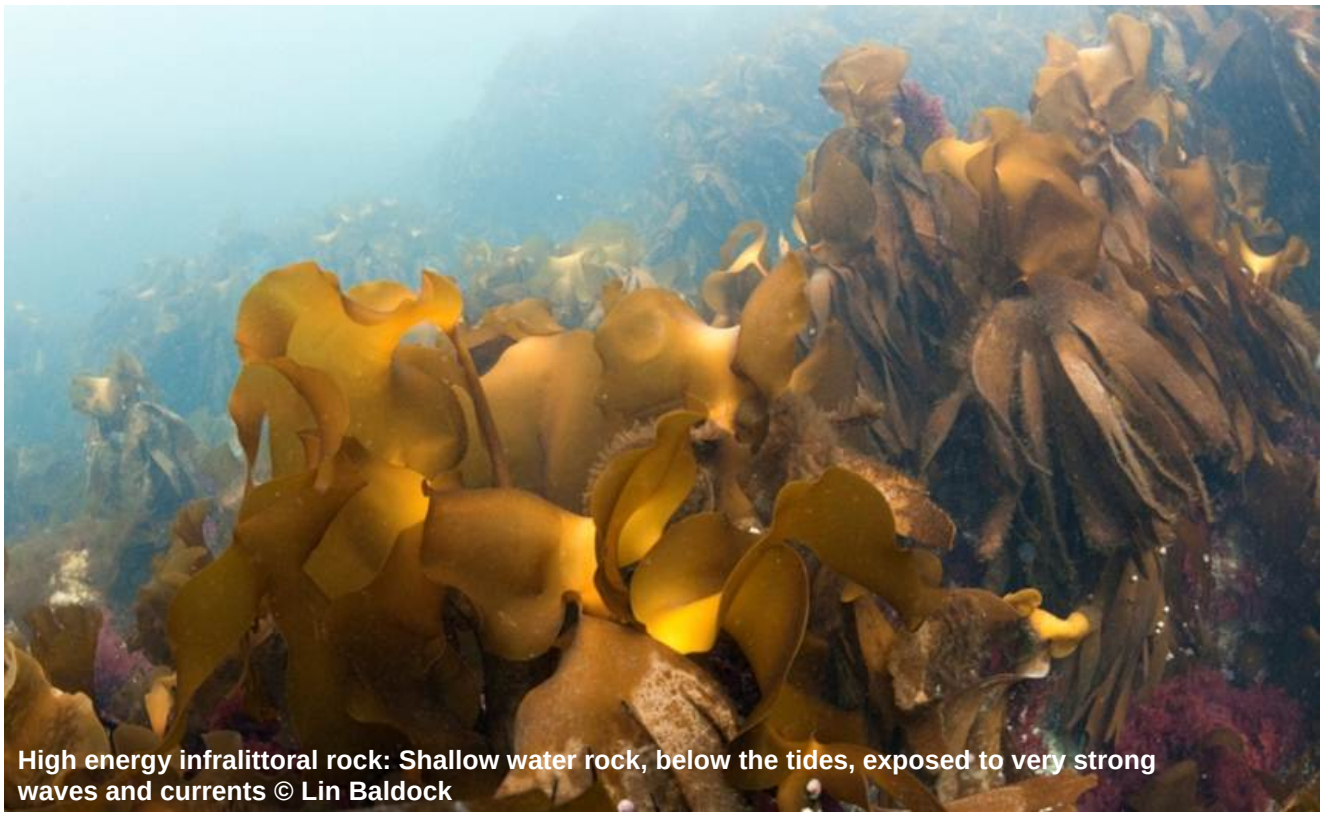
Regulators

This table lists the authorities responsible for MCZs and the activities they manage.

Lead regulator	What it manages
Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities (IFCAs) http://www.association-ifca.org.uk	• Fisheries in the inshore area (0-6 nautical miles (nm)) including commercial fisheries and recreational sea angling
Marine Management Organisation (MMO) https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/marine-management-organisation	• Fisheries in the 6-12nm area • Fisheries: enforcement of national and EU legislation • Licensable activities such as dredging and disposal of dredged material, removal of gravel below mean high water springs, subsea cables (up to 12nm), construction (including renewables below 100MW generating capacity, ports and coastal protection) • Harbour Orders and Harbour Empowerment Orders • Section 36 of the Electricity Act 1989 and safety zones for offshore renewable energy installations consents • Enforcement of licensable activity and other consents (including deemed marine licences) • Development of marine plans • Activities requiring a wildlife licence
Environment Agency (EA) https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/environment-agency	• Fisheries for migratory and freshwater fish • Coastal protection and flood management • Water quality • Permitted discharges from terrestrial sources
Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-of-energy-climate-change	• Oil and gas related activities • Renewable energy related activities
Harbour Authorities and local planning authorities	• Harbour authorities have management responsibilities for the port and coastal waters within their jurisdiction • Local authorities manage activities at the coast. These include coastal recreation, tourism, economic regeneration, flood protection and planning on coasts and estuaries. For further information contact your local authority or IFCA
Department for Transport (DfT) https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-transport	• Ports, shipping, harbours, ship pollution and offshore safety
Natural England (NE) https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/natural-england	• Public access

Further information

Read about government policy on MCZs at:
https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/marine-environment
See Natural England's advice on MCZs at:
http://nepubprod.appspot.com/publication/4594304593952768



High energy infralittoral rock: Shallow water rock, below the tides, exposed to very strong waves and currents © Lin Baldock

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