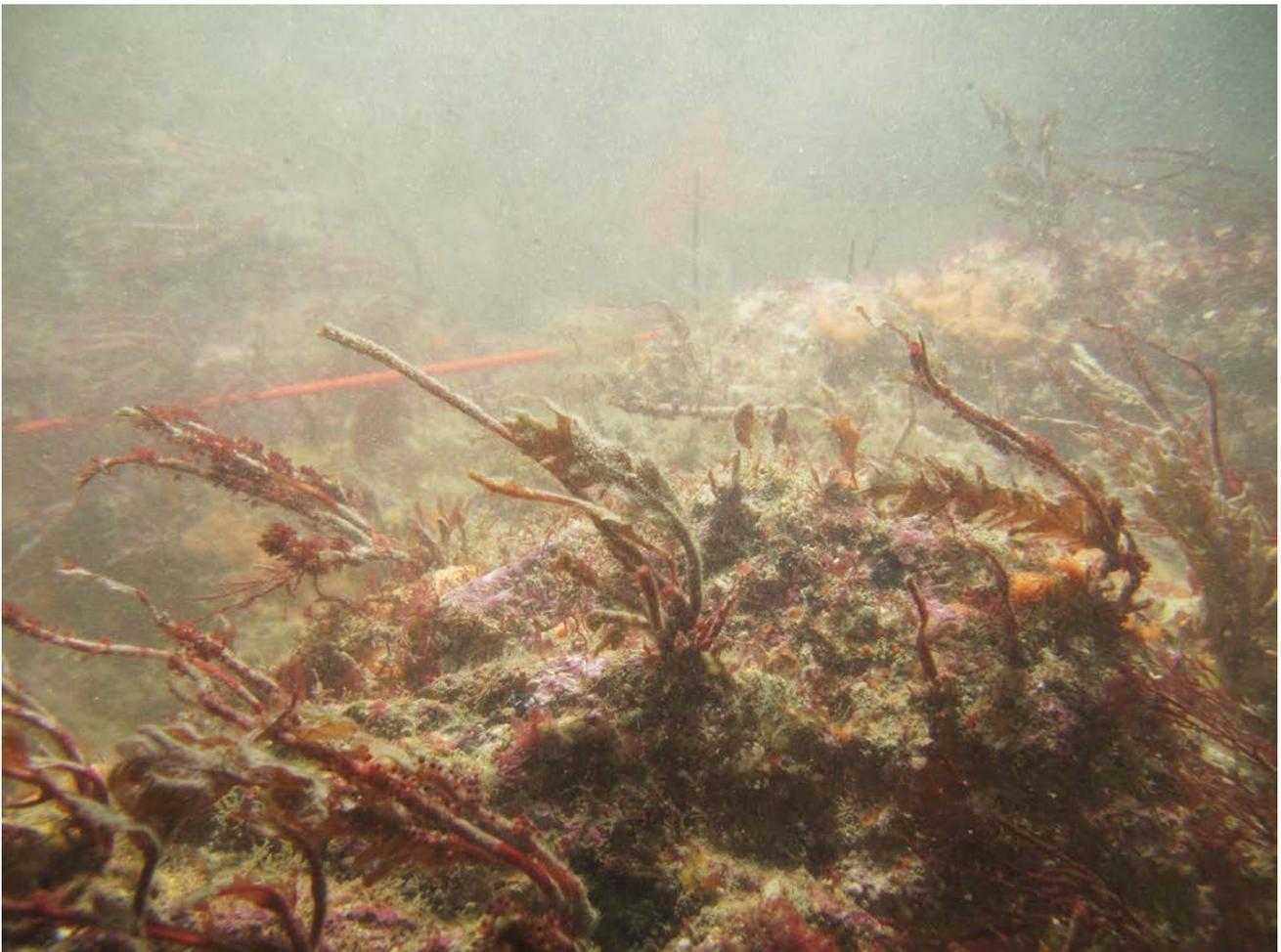


Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

Selsey Bill and the Hounds Marine Conservation Zone

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

31 May 2019



Moderate energy infralittoral rock © Crown Copyright

Overview

This site became a Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ) in May 2019. This means that specific features within this area are protected and, where necessary, regulators will manage marine activities.

Where is the site?

Selsey Bill and the Hounds Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ) is an inshore site which covers an area of approximately 16 km² and is located by the town of Selsey in West Sussex on the south coast of England. The landward boundary is at Mean Low Water and the site adjoins the Bracklesham Bay Site of Special Scientific Interest. The site lies within the Eastern Channel region of English waters.

Why is the site 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.

Selsey Bill and the Hounds is well known for its high biodiversity and species richness, supported by a variety of different habitats ranging from rocky habitats to soft sandy sediments. The site provides additional protection for a series of geological interest features that are exposed on, and underlie, the foreshore within Bracklesham Bay. These rock features, known locally as "The Hounds", consist of outcrops of limestone and clay exposures and are representative of a coherent rock system stretching across the MCZ from the northwest corner to the southeast. These rock features provide a range of habitats that support a wide variety of species, with deeper or vertical rock faces dominated by animals such as anemones, sponges, and sea squirts.

The site also protects one of the best examples of peat and clay exposures on the southeast coast. Within the southeast of the site is the Mixon Hole, a dramatic 20 m drop in the seafloor exposing clay cliffs capped with limestone. This feature supports a rich diversity of habitats and species and has been classed as a marine Site of Nature Conservation Importance by West Sussex County Council.

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
Bracklesham Bay geological feature	Maintain in a favourable condition
Short-snouted seahorse (<i>Hippocampus hippocampus</i>)	
Subtidal mixed sediments	
Subtidal sand	
High energy infralittoral rock	Recover to a favourable condition
Low energy infralittoral rock	
Moderate energy infralittoral rock	
Moderate energy circalittoral rock	
Peat and clay exposures	

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 and national laws that 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, including introducing voluntary measures, use of the existing planning and licensing framework, specific byelaws and orders. 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>.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fisheries within British limits around the coast of England. • Licensable activities such as construction, alteration or improvement of works, dredging and disposal, other removals or deposits, incineration or the scuttling of vessels within England's marine area. • Section 36 (of the Electricity Act 1989) Consents and Safety Zones for offshore renewable energy installations producing up to 100MW. • Activities requiring a marine wildlife licence.
Environment Agency (EA) https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/environment-agency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fisheries for migratory and freshwater fish. • Coastal protection and flood management. • Water quality, including environmental permits for discharges from terrestrial sources.
Oil and Gas Authority https://www.ogauthority.co.uk/	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Licensing for exploration and exploitation of oil and gas reserves.

<p>Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-business-energy-and-industrial-strategy Offshore Petroleum Regulator for Environment and Decommissioning (OPRED) – Part of BEIS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oil and gas related activities • Renewable energy related activities • Environmental approvals and consents for offshore oil and gas related activities, Carbon Capture and Storage and Gas Unloading and Storage, and decommissioning activities.
<p>Harbour Authorities and Local Planning Authorities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harbour authorities have management responsibilities for ports and coastal waters within their limits. • Local planning authorities manage activities at the coast. These include coastal recreation, public rights of way (including the English Coastal Path),
<p>Department for Transport (DfT) https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-transport</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy on environmental impacts associated with ports and shipping, including pollution from ships. • Policy on maritime safety including navigation safety. <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) - An Executive Agency of the Department for Transport https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/maritime-and-coastguard-agency https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/maritime-and-coastguard-agency</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vessel safety consents, including certification of seafarers and equipment.
<p>Natural England (NE) https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/natural-england</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishment and management of the English Coastal path. • Activities requiring consents and ascents within or adjacent to Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs). • Activities requiring wildlife licences for terrestrial
<p>The Planning Inspectorate https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/planning-inspectorate</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activities requiring Development Consent Orders under the Planning Act 2008, regarded as Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects

Further information

Read about government policy on MCZs at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/marine-conservation-zone-designations-in-england>

Read the advice provided by Natural England on MCZs at:

<http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5703660445368320>



Short-snouted seahorse © Paul Naylor / The Wildlife Trusts

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