

## Farnes East Marine Conservation Zone

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

**17 January 2016**



Survey image from Farnes East MCZ showing a sunstar (*Crossaster* sp.) on subtidal mixed sediments of sand ripples with gravel © Crown copyright

### 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

Farnes East MCZ is a site off the coast of Northumberland. It stretches across the inshore and offshore waters, covering 945km<sup>2</sup>.

### 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 is important because it protects moderate energy circalittoral rock: deep water rock in areas with less waves and currents. It is an important habitat, but currently not enough is protected in this region. As this rock is in deep waters, very little sunlight reaches them. This prevents seaweeds from growing, and the marine environment becomes dominated by animals. The animal communities that thrive here include cup coral, sea-fans, anemones, and sponges. Mobile animals in this environment can include starfish, brittlestars, and sea urchins.

The undersea (subtidal) mud in this site is an important habitat for many animals, like worms, cockles, urchins and sea cucumbers. Other animals (referred to as megafauna) like mud shrimps and even fish burrow into the mud. This creates networks of burrows which shelter smaller

creatures like worms and brittlestars. The mud also provides a habitat for sea-pens, which are tall and luminous soft corals which got their name because they look like quill pens.

Sediment on the seabed in this site provides protection a variety of different marine life. These range from burrowing worms, shrimps and mussels to crabs, fish and starfish scavenging on the seabed surface. The sand on the seabed is also an important habitat. At first glance, sand may appear desert like, but close inspection can reveal flat fish and sand eels camouflaged on the surface of the sand, and worms living within it.

Ocean quahog is also found within the site, often entirely buried in the sand with a small tube extending to the surface for breathing and feeding.

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
Moderate energy circalittoral rock	Maintain in favourable condition
Subtidal coarse sediment	Maintain in favourable condition
Subtidal mixed sediments	Maintain in favourable condition
Subtidal sand	Maintain in favourable condition
Subtidal mud	Recover to favourable condition
Sea-pen and burrowing megafauna communities	Recover to favourable condition
Ocean quahog ( <i>Arctica islandica</i> )	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>.

# Regulators

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

Lead regulator	What it manages
<b>Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities (IFCAs)</b> <a href="http://www.association-ifca.org.uk">http://www.association-ifca.org.uk</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fisheries in the inshore area (0-6 nautical miles (nm)) including commercial fisheries and recreational sea angling</li> </ul>
<b>Marine Management Organisation (MMO)</b> <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/marine-management-organisation">https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/marine-management-organisation</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fisheries in the 6-12nm area</li> <li>Fisheries: enforcement of national and EU legislation</li> <li>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)</li> <li>Harbour Orders and Harbour Empowerment Orders</li> <li>Section 36 of the Electricity Act 1989 and safety zones for offshore renewable energy installations consents</li> <li>Enforcement of licensable activity and other consents (including deemed marine licences)</li> <li>Development of marine plans</li> <li>Activities requiring a wildlife licence</li> </ul>
<b>Environment Agency (EA)</b> <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/environment-agency">https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/environment-agency</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fisheries for migratory and freshwater fish</li> <li>Coastal protection and flood management</li> <li>Water quality</li> <li>Permitted discharges from terrestrial sources</li> </ul>
<b>Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC)</b> <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-of-energy-climate-change">https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-of-energy-climate-change</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Oil and gas related activities</li> <li>Renewable energy related activities</li> </ul>
<b>Harbour Authorities and local planning authorities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Harbour authorities have management responsibilities for the port and coastal waters within their jurisdiction</li> <li>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</li> </ul>
<b>Department for Transport (DfT)</b> <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-transport">https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-transport</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ports, shipping, harbours, ship pollution and offshore safety</li> </ul>
<b>Natural England (NE)</b> <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/natural-england">https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/natural-england</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public access</li> </ul>

## Further information

Read about government policy on MCZs at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/marine-environment>

See JNCC's advice on MCZs at:

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



Survey image from Farnes East MCZ of a hermit crab (*Pagurus berhardus*) on subtidal sand  
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