

Runswick Bay 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 Runswick Bay MCZ, showing brittle stars (*Ophiuroidea* sp) and *Flustra* sp. on subtidal coarse sediment and mud © 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

Runswick Bay is an inshore site located off the Yorkshire Coast, to the north-west of Whitby. The site covers an area of around 68 km², and extends 3 nautical miles out to sea.

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.

The seabed across this site is made up by rock and sediment which form a varied range of habitats, full of life. These features are not protected by other marine protected areas in the nearby area so this site will provide a link in the network of sites for the life that these habitats support.

The intertidal area, which is below water at high tide, and exposed at low tide, is made up of rocky reefs, boulders and pools, as well as caves and sandy beaches.

The rocky seashores are exposed to very strong waves and currents. This is a habitat for mussels, limpets and barnacles which cling to the rocks, as well as small tufts of seaweeds which grow in cracks and crevices. The rocks in the shallow waters below the tides are home to large kelps and some smaller red seaweeds. Species such as worms, crabs, sea snails and shrimp-like animals also live amongst the seaweeds.

Deep water (circalittoral) rocks in this site provide a habitat for a range of species. The depth means that there is lack of sunlight, which prevents seaweeds from growing, allowing animal communities to thrive. The rich seabed habitats supports a number of crustacean species, including eight species of crab and the common lobster. The site is also a spawning ground for a number of fish species including herring, sprat, cod, whiting and plaice. Ocean quahog, a cockle shaped bivalve, with paired, hinged, shells, is also found within the site. The Ocean quahog often lives 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
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 sand and muddy sand	Maintain in favourable condition
Moderate energy infralittoral rock	Maintain in favourable condition
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	Maintain in favourable condition
Ocean quahog (<i>Arctica islandica</i>)	Maintain in 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
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 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oil and gas related activities Renewable energy related activities
Harbour Authorities and local planning authorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ports, shipping, harbours, ship pollution and offshore safety
Natural England (NE) https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/natural-england	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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>



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