

East of Haig Fras Marine Conservation Zone

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

31 May 2019



High energy circalittoral rock © JNCC / Cefas

Overview

This site became a Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ) in December 2013. This means that specific features within this area are protected and, where necessary, regulators will manage marine activities. Three additional features were added to the site in May 2019: fan mussel (*Atrina fragilis*), high energy circalittoral rock and sea pen & burrowing megafauna communities.

Where is the site?

East of Haig Fras MCZ is an offshore site located in the Western Channel and Celtic Sea. The site lies approximately 67 km north of Land's End in Cornwall and covers an area of around 400 km². The site lies in waters between 50 and 100 metres in depth, with small areas in the western part of the site dipping below 100 metres deep.

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 and declining habitats and species found in our seas.

East of Haig Fras MCZ protects a range of seabed habitats, including subtidal sediments and rock. This site makes an important contribution to the marine protected areas network by conserving habitats that are representative of our seas.

This site protects six different habitat types, which are found in varying proportions throughout the site, and two features of conservation importance. There are small areas of exposed rock that are found within the site but much of the seabed is comprised of different types of sediments. The sediments occur in a complex mosaic which creates a range of different habitats each capable of supporting a variety of marine wildlife. The depth of water across the site means the amount of light reaching the seabed is limited, resulting in a seabed dominated by animal communities. These communities are diverse, ranging from worms and molluscs (such as squat lobsters) to sponges, starfish and anemones. Additionally, the site is also known to support numerous fish species such as scaldfish, megrim and red gurnard.

Designation of this site as an MCZ protects the following features. You can find detailed information about each of the protected features on the [JNCC website](#).

Protected features	General management approach
Fan mussel (<i>Atrina fragilis</i>)	Recover to a favourable condition
High energy circalittoral rock	
Moderate energy circalittoral rock	
Sea-pen and burrowing megafauna communities	
Subtidal coarse sediment and mixed sediments mosaic	
Subtidal mud	
Subtidal sand	

Management of the site

The General Management Approach for all seven protected features of this site is to 'Recover to favourable condition'. To ensure that the site achieves its conservation objectives, 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 (see section below). There are existing byelaws and national laws that regulators use to manage fishing, offshore industry, 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.

<p>Environment Agency (EA) https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/environment-agency</p>	<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.
<p>Oil and Gas Authority https://www.ogauthority.co.uk/</p>	<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</p> <p>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), tourism, economic regeneration, flood protection, and planning and development on coasts and estuaries, including aquaculture in the intertidal zone.
<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>Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) - An Executive Agency of the Department for Transport 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 and intertidal species.

The Planning Inspectorate

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/planning-inspectorate>

- Activities requiring Development Consent Orders under the Planning Act 2008, regarded as Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects

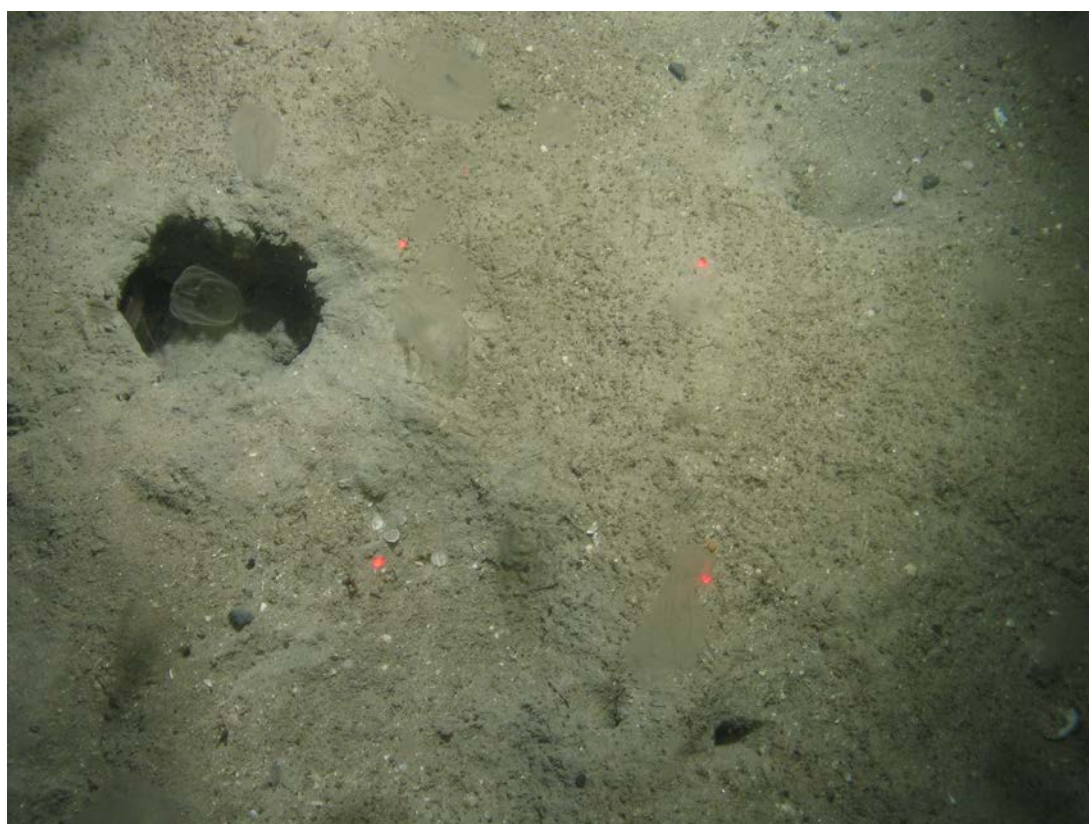
Further information

Read about government policy on MCZs at:

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

Read the scientific advice provided by the Joint Nature Conservation Committee on MCZs at:

<http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-7119>



An example of a burrow created by sea-pens and burrowing megafauna © JNCC / Cefas

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