

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

Bideford to Foreland Point Recommended Marine Conservation Zone

January 2015

**Consultation on Sites Proposed for Designation in the Second Tranche
of Marine Conservation Zones**

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



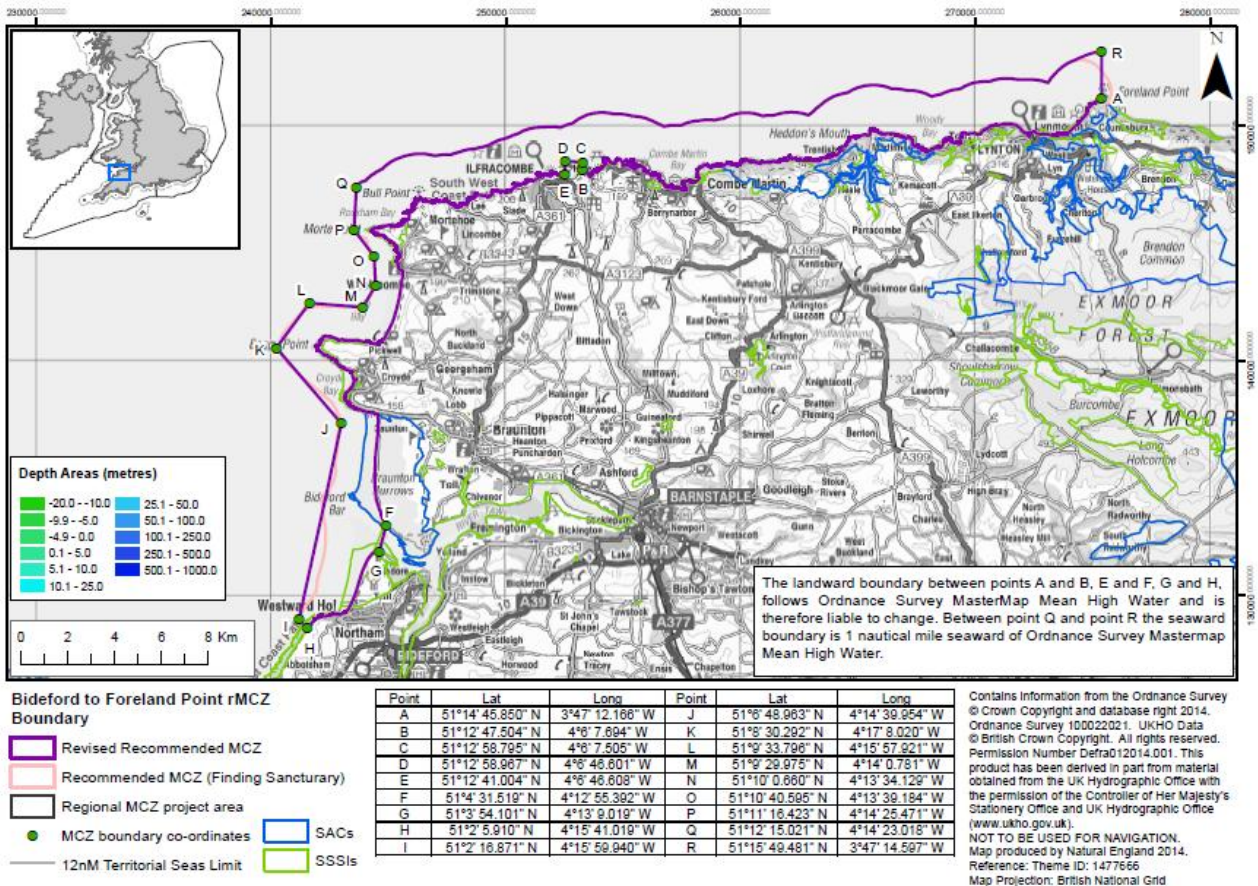
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Where the site is located

Bideford to Foreland Point recommended Marine Conservation Zone (rMCZ) is an inshore site covering an area of approximately 104 km².

Minor changes have been made to the boundary to improve and simplify the boundaries of the site. The changes to the boundary do not significantly affect the ecological value of the site.



How to comment on the consultation

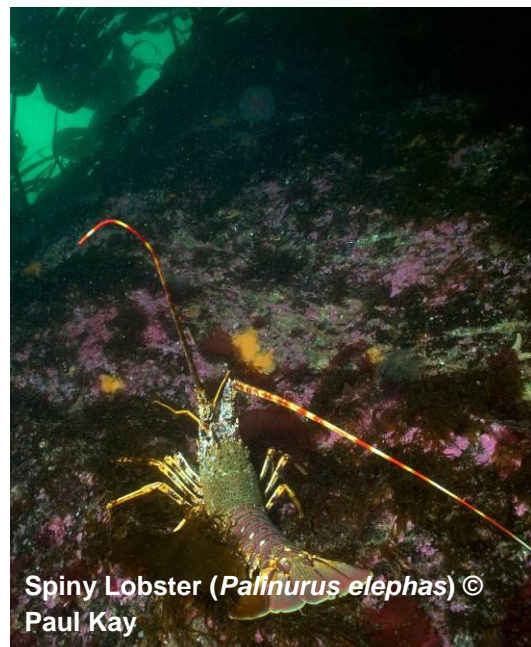
You can comment on this proposal by responding to the [consultation](#) taking place between 30th January and 24th April 2015.

Why the site is environmentally important

Bideford to Foreland Point rMCZ would protect a diverse range of features. The site 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 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, which feed on the 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.

Other features in the site are important for creating connectivity between sites along the north coast of Devon and Cornwall. This site protects a range of habitats from the intertidal beaches to the subtidal sediments in depths of up to 36 metres. The site includes a range of rocky habitats which in deeper underwater areas support a variety of animals including sponges, sea anemones and mussels.



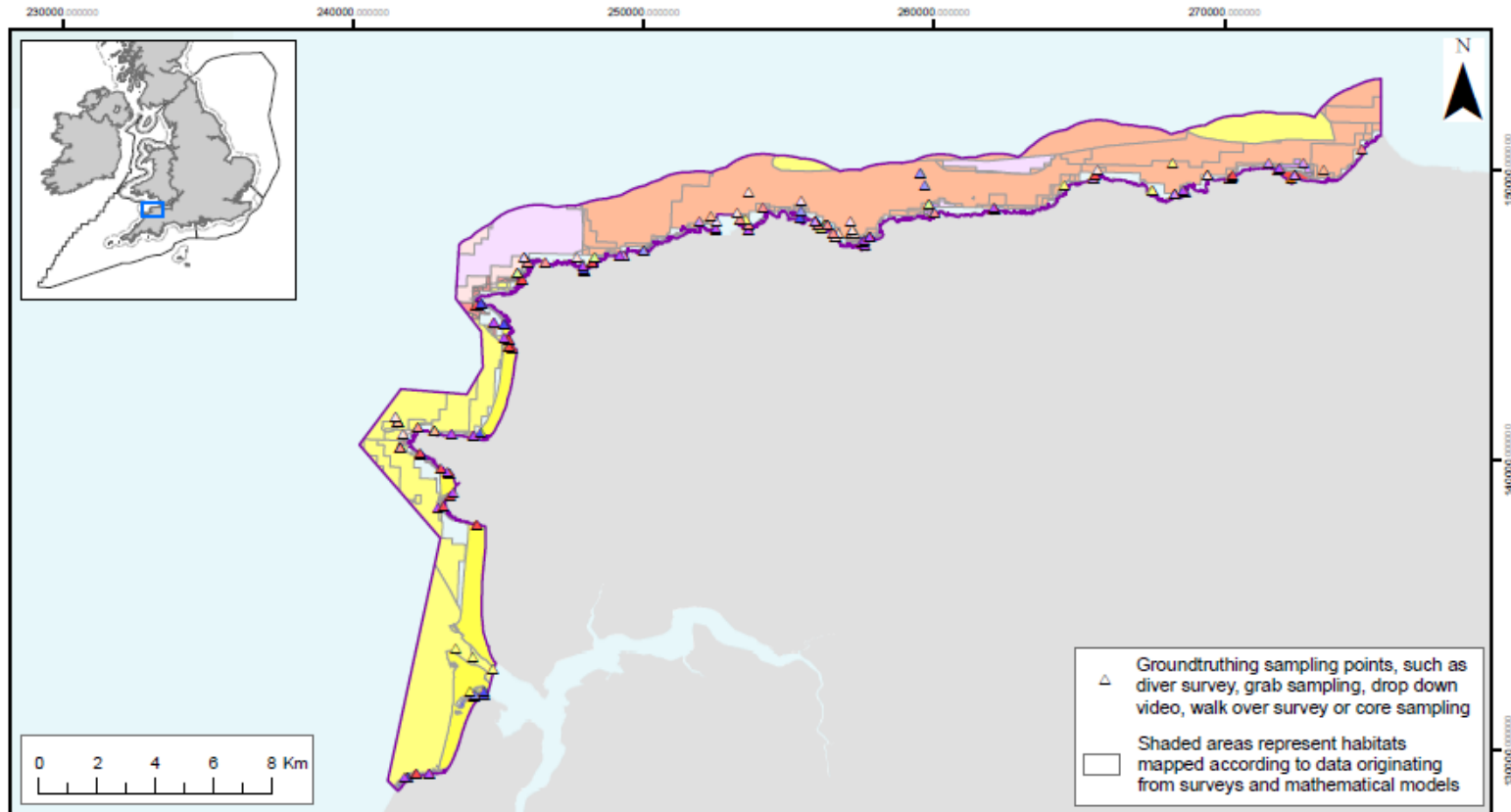
What this site would protect

Designation would protect the following features. You can read more about the features this site protects and why they are important [here](#).

Feature	General management approach
High energy intertidal rock	Maintain at favourable condition
Moderate energy intertidal rock	
Low energy intertidal rock	
Intertidal coarse sediment	
Intertidal sand and muddy sand	
Intertidal mixed sediments	
Intertidal under boulder communities	
Estuarine rocky habitats	
Littoral chalk communities	
High energy infralittoral rock	
Moderate energy infralittoral rock	
Low energy infralittoral rock	
High energy circalittoral rock	
Moderate energy circalittoral rock	
Subtidal coarse sediment	
Subtidal mixed sediments	
Honeycomb worm reefs (<i>Sabellaria alveolata</i>)	
Fragile sponge & anthozoan communities on subtidal rocky habitats	
Pink sea-fan (<i>Eunicella verrucosa</i>)	
Subtidal sand	Recover to favourable condition
Spiny lobster (<i>Palinurus elephas</i>)	

Where the features are located

The following maps show the location of the features to be protected. A range of different types of surveys have been used to create these maps. More detailed information on the techniques used and the features themselves can be found [here](#).



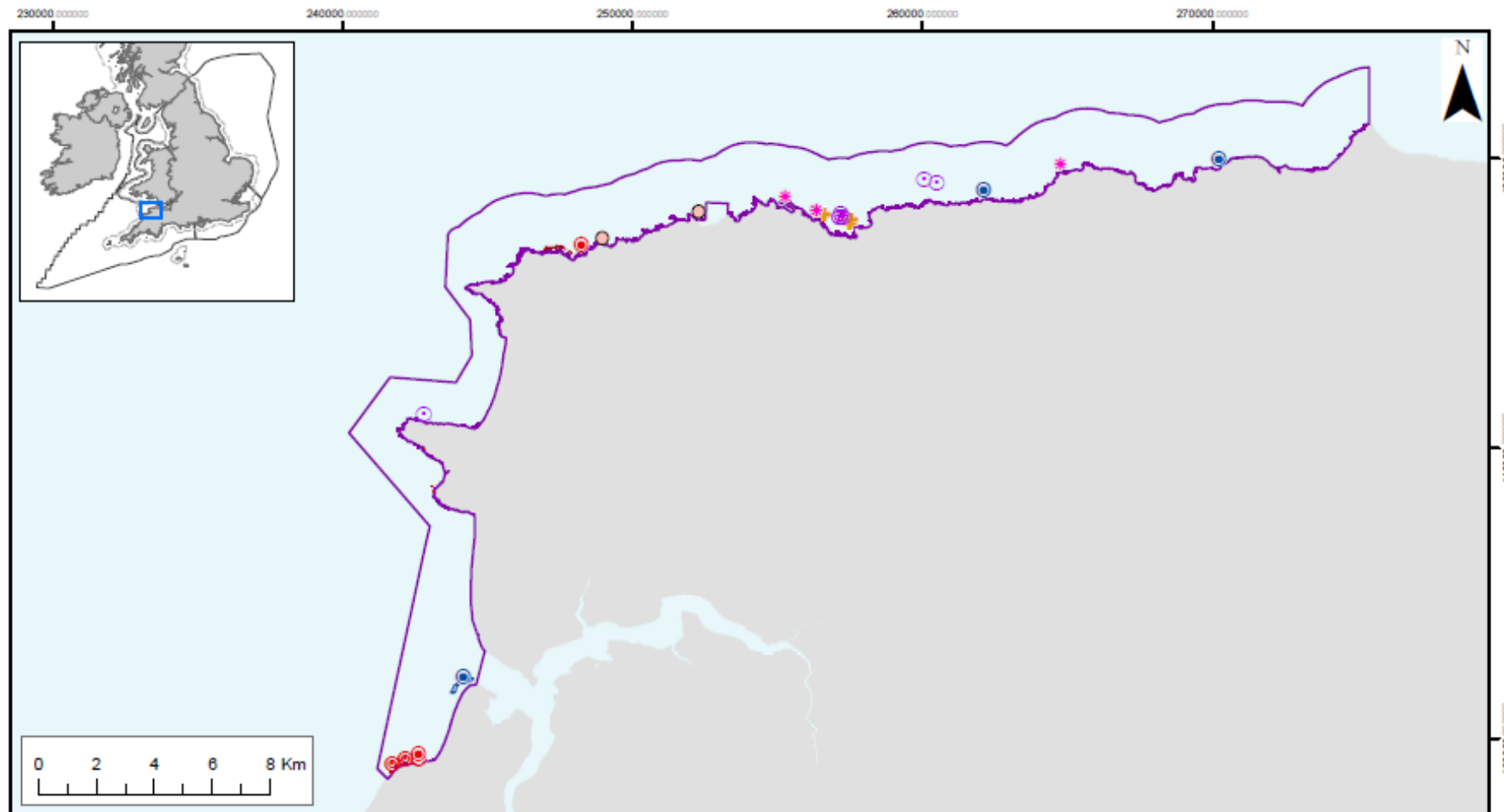
Bideford to Foreland Point recommended MCZ Broad Scale Habitats

- Recommended MCZ
- Regional MCZ Project Area
- 12nM Territorial Seas Limit
- Sea
- Land

Features proposed for 2015 designation

- | | |
|---|--|
| High energy intertidal rock (A1.1) | Moderate energy infralittoral rock (A3.2) |
| Moderate energy intertidal rock (A1.2) | Low energy infralittoral rock (A3.3) |
| Low energy intertidal rock (A1.3) | High energy circalittoral rock (A4.1) |
| Intertidal coarse sediment (A2.1) | Moderate energy circalittoral rock (A4.2) |
| Intertidal sand and muddy sand (A2.2) | Subtidal coarse sediment (A5.1) |
| Intertidal mixed sediments (A2.4) | Subtidal sand (A5.2) |
| High energy infralittoral rock (A3.1) | Subtidal mixed sediments (A5.4) |

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**Bideford to Foreland Point recommended MCZ
Features of Conservation Importance**

- Recommended MCZ
- Regional MCZ Project Area
- 12nM Territorial Seas Limit
- Sea
- Land

Features proposed for 2015 designation

- Intertidal under boulder communities
- Estuarine rocky habitats
- Honeycomb worm (*Sabellaria alveolata*) reefs
- Littoral chalk communities
- Fragile sponge & anthozoan communities on subtidal rocky habitats
- + Spiny lobster (*Palinurus elephas*)
- * Pink sea-fan (*Eunicella verrucosa*)
- Estuarine rocky habitats
- Littoral chalk communities
- Honeycomb worm (*Sabellaria alveolata*) reefs

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Features that are not proposed for designation

The following features are not proposed for designation as there is currently insufficient supporting evidence. Inclusion of these features may be considered in the future if scientific evidence becomes available:

- intertidal mud,
- subtidal mud,
- subtidal macrophyte-dominated sediment,
- blue mussel beds,
- native oyster (*Ostrea edulis*).

Activities which are likely to be affected

Management decisions are taken on a case by case basis by relevant regulators. Management will not automatically mean that economic and recreational activities will be restricted, decisions will be based on the specifics of each case. Restrictions on an activity will depend on the sensitivity of species, habitats and geological/geomorphological features (for which a site is designated) to the activities taking place in that area. More detail is available in the [Impact Assessment](#).

Sectors or activities likely affected by designation		
Sector	Activity Affected	Best Cost Estimate (£) per year
Renewable energy	Tidal	2,000
Ports, harbours and shipping	Harbour development	1,400
Archaeological heritage	Future investigations of site	Unquantified
UK commercial fishing	Bottom trawls	<£100
Best estimate total cost		3,400

Renewable energy - tidal

This site overlaps with the inner Bristol Channel tidal energy Potential Development Area. If the site were developed, developers would need to take into account the impact of the development on the features in the site. This could potentially increase the cost of the licence application.

Ports, harbours and shipping

Future licence applications for development at Ilfracombe Harbour will need to consider the possible effects of their activities on the features designated within the site. This would increase the cost of the Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) for future licence applications.

Archaeological heritage

Nineteen wrecks are recorded in the site. There is likely to be an increase in the cost for carrying out EIAs for future licence applications within this site. Following designation, these will need to consider the effect of the activity on the features designated at this site.

UK commercial fishing

The following gears are known to be used within the site:

- bottom trawls - fishing ground overlaps with the western edge of the site, but fishing activity within the site is thought to be low,
- nets - netting occurs within in the site, particularly from vessels operating from Ilfracombe and occasional drift netting for bass within the mouth of the Taw-Torridge Estuary,
- pots and traps - the site is primarily fished by potters and activity varies seasonally, vessels operate within the site from Lynmouth, Bideford and Ilfracombe.

Management of towed gear and restrictions in the removal of spiny lobster from the site may be required due to the sensitivity of the features recommended for protection.

Flood and risk management

Following designation, any future permit/licence applications within or near to the site will require an added assessment within the EIA to consider the potential effect of the activity on the features designated at this site, which could lead to an increase in cost of the EIA package.

National defence

The Ministry of Defence is known to make use of the site for training activities.

We expect this activity to be able to continue. Activity which is harmful to features can be avoided through additional planning during operations and training.

Activities that are unlikely to be affected

These activities are known to take place at this site but are not likely to be damaging to the features proposed for designation at their current levels of intensity:

- cables (interconnectors and telecom cables) – two active telecommunication cables intersect with the site,
- water pollution from activities on land (as this is managed under the Water Framework Directive),
- recreational activities - wildlife watching is subject to general code of conduct,
- water abstraction,
- transit of ships.

Additional Information

To read the full consultation document, or respond to the consultation, please visit

<https://consult.defra.gov.uk/marine/tranche2mczs>

To read the advice provided by Natural England, please visit

<http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5803843768025088?category=6742552893980672>

For further information, please contact Defra on

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