

South Dorset Marine Conservation Zone

Where is this site?

South Dorset MCZ lies mainly within the 12 nautical mile limit but a small part extends further seawards. It is located approximately 17.5 km south of St Alban's (St Aldhelm's) Head, to the south-east of Swanage. The site covers an area of approximately 193 km² making it one of the largest MCZs.

Why is this site important?

The MCZ protects two seabed habitats, subtidal coarse sediment and subtidal chalk, as well as their associated species. Subtidal chalk is typically found on the south-east and eastern coasts of the UK, but this site protects the only known example of this seabed habitat within the south-west region.



What does this Marine Conservation Zone protect?

South Dorset MCZ protects an area of seabed that ranges from 36 to 52 metres deep. In deeper water such as this, the chalk seabed environment forms reefs and sea caves. These are particularly important to marine life and have been known to support rare species of sponge, edible crabs and velvet swimming crabs. The surface of subtidal chalk is often bored into by bivalve molluscs, such as the common piddock (*Pholas dactylus*), which use the teeth-like projections on the front of their shells to grind holes into the rock. Once empty, these bore holes provide habitats for a range of crevice-dwelling animals including shellfish, worms and other small invertebrates.

Subtidal coarse sediment can provide nursery grounds for many ecologically and commercially important fish including sea bass and several types of flat fish. The sediment can also support species such as sand eels, which are an important food source for seabirds such as puffin, razorbills and guillemots.

Features	General management approach
Subtidal coarse sediment	Maintain in favourable condition
Subtidal chalk	Recover to favourable condition
Moderate energy circalittoral rock	Recover to favourable condition

Who will manage Marine Conservation Zones?

Many activities within the marine environment are regulated through marine licences. More information regarding the marine licensing process in relation to MCZs can be found on the MMO website

www.marinemangement.org.uk/licensing/marine.htm.

Other activities are regulated through different mechanisms. For example fishing activities are managed through European legislation, national statutory instruments, byelaws and self-imposed voluntary agreements. Similar arrangements are in place to manage the range of activities that may impact MCZs including pollution, coastal development and recreation.

Management of sites is currently being prioritised nationally according to the potential or actual adverse impacts of activities on the features designated in relation to fishing activities. This prioritisation will be further refined at a local level taking into account relevant information and will guide regulators to those sites which may need protection before others.

Any management measures that are required for MCZs will be applied on a case-by-case basis. Management measures will be implemented at sites most at risk of damage first, regulating only those activities which have a detrimental impact on the features. In cases where there is a high risk to designated features being damaged emergency measures may be put in place to ensure the protection of vulnerable habitats and species.

What happens now this site has been designated?

The site specific information below provides an overview of which activities may be affected by the designation of the MCZ and the current management measures. As with all management measures, they may, of course, be subject to change in the light of new evidence becoming available.

Current activities identified at this site which could be affected include commercial fisheries both UK and non UK fleets and a proposed development area for wave energy in close proximity. The renewable sector will be regulated through the appropriate licensing regimes, which will take into consideration the MCZ designation when assessing environmental impacts of marine works as part of the licensing application process.

Fisheries management is within the jurisdiction of the MMO as the site is 12nm from the coastline. Fisheries management measures will need to be proposed and agreed through the European Commission in accordance with the Common Fisheries Policy, applying to UK and non-UK fishing vessels alike. Defra will coordinate input from the MMO and JNCC before formally submitting proposals to the EC. The MMO will be the lead authority regarding implementation and compliance of those measures. All current relevant national and EU fisheries legislation apply to this site such as Hake Recovery and Western Waters control measures.

Further information is available at

www.marinemanagement.org.uk/fisheries/monitoring/regulations_bluebook.htm

Where can I find out further information?

An interactive map showing this MCZs and other marine protected areas is available at <http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-5201>

Additional information about this site and other MCZs is available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/protecting-and-sustainably-using-the-marine-environment>

and within Natural England's advice available at

<http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/category/1499649>



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Annex: Management

Lead organisation	Activities
Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities (IFCAs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fisheries (0-6nm) including commercial fisheries and recreational fishing activities such as sea angling For further information visit www.association-ifca.org.uk
Marine Management Organisation (MMO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fisheries (management) (6-12nm)• Fisheries (enforcement) national and EU legislation• Licensable activities such as deposit and removal activities below mean high water springs, including subsea cables (up to 12nm), construction (including renewables <100MW, ports and coastal protection), dredging and disposal• Harbour Orders and Harbour Empowerment Orders• Section 36 and safety zone consents• Enforcement of licensable activity and other consents (including deemed marine licences)• Development of marine plans integrating the social requirements, economic potential and environmental priorities of marine plan areas• Activities requiring a wildlife licence For further information visit www.marinemanagement.org.uk/fisheries or www.marinemanagement.org.uk/licensing/marine.htm
Environment Agency (EA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fisheries management for migratory and fresh water fish• Coastal protection and flood management• Water quality• Permitted discharges from terrestrial sources For further information visit www.environment-agency.gov.uk/default.aspx
Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Oil and Gas related activities• Renewable energy related activities For further information visit www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-of-energy-climate-change
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 have role to manage, regulate and facilitate activities at the coast. These include management of coastal recreation, tourism, economic regeneration, flood protection, spatial planning and coastal zone and estuary management, For further information contact your local authority or IFCA
Department for Transport (DfT)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Responsible for shipping, harbours, ship pollution and offshore safety For further information visit www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-transport
Natural England (NE)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Public access For further information visit www.naturalengland.org.uk/