

South-West Deeps (West) Marine Conservation Zone

Where is this site?

South-West Deeps (West) MCZ is an offshore site situated to the south west of England, approximately 230 km from Land's End in Cornwall. The site extends along the UK continental shelf, protecting a total area of around 1800 km².

Why is this site important?

The site protects an area of continental shelf seabed that is comprised of various sediments. These sediment particles range in size from fine sand to coarse gravels, forming different habitats that support a range of associated species. This site makes an important contribution to the marine protected areas network by conserving habitats that are representative of our seas. Additionally, large Celtic Sea Relict Sandbanks extend across the site. These are included for protection because of their geological importance.



What does this Marine Conservation Zone protect?

South-West Deeps (West) MCZ protects three types of habitat and one feature of geological importance. Within the site the seabed is mainly comprised of sand, with smaller areas of both coarse and mixed sediments also present. These habitats are known to support a range of animal species including those which live within the sediments such as small burrowing worms and bivalve molluscs to urchins, starfish and some crustaceans that live on the sediment surface.

The Celtic Sea Relict Sandbanks are a geological feature of interest which run roughly north to south across the site. The sandbanks within the Celtic Sea are the largest of their kind found anywhere on Earth, with some ridges in the Celtic Sea extending up to 200 km long, 15 km wide and more than 50 m high. The sandbanks within South-West Deeps (West) MCZ tend to be quite static in nature as they are not exposed to strong tidal currents which would otherwise move the sediments.



Angler fish on sediment habitat © JNCC

Features	General management approach
Subtidal coarse sediment	Recover to favourable condition
Subtidal mixed sediments	Recover to favourable condition
Subtidal sand	Recover to favourable condition
Celtic Sea Relict Sandbanks	Maintain in favourable condition
Subtidal mud	Recover to favourable condition
Fan mussel (<i>Atrina fragilis</i>)	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.marinemanagement.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 the UK and EU commercial fisheries sector (predominately mobile gear). As this site is offshore (over 12nm from the coastline) 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/index.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 JNCC's advice available at <http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-6460>



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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.marinemangement.org.uk/fisheries or www.marinemangement.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/