



**Irish Sea  
Conservation Zones**

**Final Recommendations  
Summary**

## Irish Sea Conservation Zones is one of four regional projects set up to recommend Marine Conservation Zones to the Government.

### The story so far

This map shows the area within which the project's Regional Stakeholder Group worked to recommend Marine Conservation Zones.

Project Area



Welcome to the summary report of the final recommendations for Marine Conservation Zones in the Irish Sea project area.

These recommendations have been developed by the project's Regional Stakeholder Group and I would like to thank them wholeheartedly for their hard work and dedication. It is the first time in the UK that sea users themselves have been responsible for recommending areas for marine conservation to the Government. Despite bringing very different points of view to the table, the members of the group have achieved a highly successful set of recommendations.

I would also like to thank the thousands of sea users around the Irish Sea who, although not part of the Regional Stakeholder Group, played an important role in these recommendations. Their time, information and suggestions are greatly appreciated.

These recommendations are not the end of the story. Having been put forward to the Government's statutory advisors in August 2011, the recommendations will then be considered by Government ministers. A public consultation will follow; this will give people another opportunity to comment on the possible Marine Conservation Zones before they are designated..

Around the world and across every sector there is a growing consensus that our marine environment needs new protection. Europe and the UK in particular are in the midst of a large and ambitious expansion of marine protection. Marine Conservation Zones will play an important role in this historic process.

**Dr Greg Whitfield**  
Project Manager  
Irish Sea Conservation Zones



## How were the recommendations for Marine Conservation Zones made?

### Regional Stakeholder Group

The Marine Conservation Zones project was the first piece of work in the UK where recommendations for marine conservation were developed by sea users themselves.

In the Irish Sea project area, the recommendations for Marine Conservation Zones were made by the Regional Stakeholder Group.

After a careful analysis of the activities in the Irish Sea, around 40 people were invited to become members of the Regional Stakeholder Group. Broadly speaking, the sectors included in the group were: commercial fishing, marine industries, natural environment, leisure and recreation, heritage, land owners, marine research, local authorities and other administrations (Scotland, Northern Ireland and the Isle of Man).

The Regional Stakeholder Group developed its recommendations in eight workshops between March 2010 and July 2011, which were organised and led by a professional facilitator. The project team's role was mainly to help the Regional Stakeholder Group.

The Ecological Network Guidance, which was provided by Natural England and the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC), laid out which habitats and species the zones should protect and set targets for them. The recommendations that the Regional Stakeholder Group developed had to aim to meet these requirements.

The Regional Stakeholder Group worked incredibly hard through some tough negotiations. This experience forged the group into a highly effective body. Through their work the members developed a deeper understanding of the other sectors that use the Irish Sea. Crucially, they were in the driving seat in recommending Marine Conservation Zones that met the requirements of the Ecological Network Guidance.

### Wider involvement

The Regional Stakeholder Group was helped in its task by a series of Focus Groups made up of sea users from around the Irish Sea. These locally based groups met in March, April and June 2011 to give a more local, detailed point of view on issues raised by the Regional Stakeholder Group. Their information and suggestions were then taken back to the Regional Stakeholder Group.

Many other sea users were involved in the project through meetings with the project team. The project's liaison officers met over 3,500 people at more than 300 meetings in locations all around Northwest England, Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland and the Isle of Man. Through these meetings the liaison officers gathered almost 300 questionnaires detailing the way in which different people use the Irish Sea. This information was extremely valuable in helping the Regional Stakeholder Group take people's interests into account.

At different stages during the project people could also comment on the Regional Stakeholder Group's work and the project received over 100 comment forms.

Finally, the project team also sent out newsletters, ran a website and organised publicity to help keep people informed about the project. The project was mentioned in the press and on the radio or television over 370 times.



Regional Stakeholder Group

## Recommended Marine Conservation Zone 1: Mud Hole

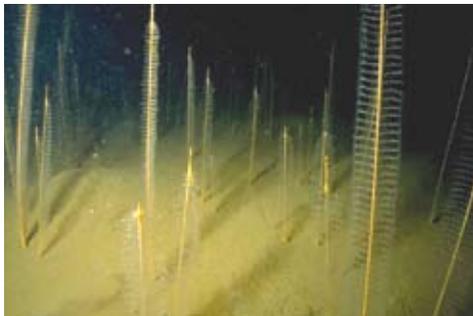
The Mud Hole Marine Conservation Zone is an area of deep water mud habitat between 26 to 38m deep, located 21km off the coast of Cumbria. The site covers just less than 73km<sup>2</sup>.

The zone is at the western edge of the Eastern Irish Sea mud basin. The muddier seabed is heavily burrowed by Dublin Bay prawns (*Nephrops*), angular crabs and several species of mud shrimp. Large green echiuran worms form volcano-like domes in the mud and the seabed supports diverse populations of molluscs and worms. Burrowing brittle stars colonise the surface of the sandier seabed. Quill-like sea pens are found here, although there is evidence that seapens and burrowing sea urchins used to be more abundant in these habitats.

The Regional Stakeholder Group identified this zone to protect subtidal mud habitats, mud habitats in deep water, sea pens and burrowing megafauna. The aim is to recover these habitats and species to a favourable condition.

According to the recommendations, benthic and dredge fishing at their current levels would require additional management in this zone. Military activities would continue to be managed through existing regulations. Pelagic fishing, transit of vessels, sea angling and other recreational activities are known to take place in the site, but at their current levels would not require additional management.

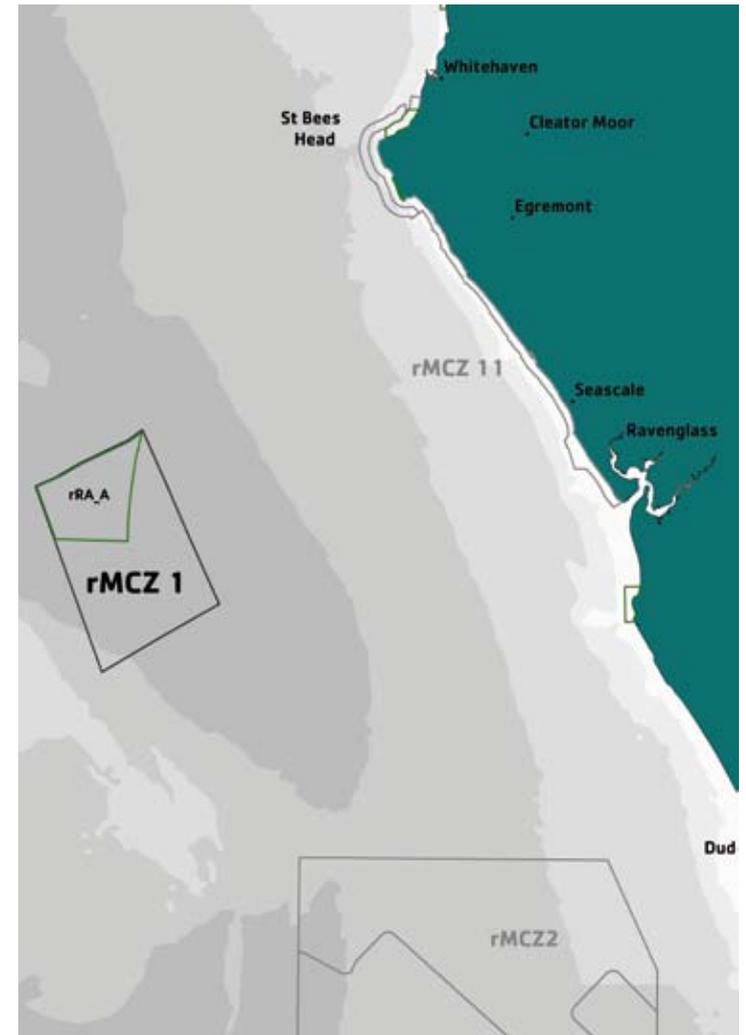
See pages 30-31 for important information on recommended Reference Areas.



Sea pens



Brittle stars



Recommended MCZ  
Scale: 1:150,000

Once designated, Marine Conservation Zones will not all be closed areas. Not all activities will be restricted in every zone. However, see pages 30-31 for important information on recommended Reference Areas

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NOT TO BE USED FOR NAVIGATION.

1:200,000

**rMCZ**  
Recommended Marine Conservation Zone

**rRA**  
Recommended Reference Areas

## Recommended Marine Conservation Zone 2: West of Walney

The West of Walney Marine Conservation Zone is located roughly 8km offshore from Walney Island, close to several windfarms, and covers an area of roughly 156km<sup>2</sup>.

The muddier seabed in this zone is heavily burrowed by Dublin Bay prawns (Nephrops), angular crabs and several species of mud shrimp. It also supports diverse populations of small clams and worms. High densities of burrowing brittle stars colonise the surface of the sandier seabed. Some quill-like sea pens are found here although there is evidence that seapens and burrowing sea urchins used to be more abundant in these habitats.

The Regional Stakeholder Group identified this zone to protect subtidal mud, mud habitats in deep water, sea pens and burrowing megafauna. The aim is to recover these habitats and species to a favourable condition.

According to the recommendations, benthic and dredge fishing at their current level would require additional management in this zone. Telecommunication and power cables, oil and gas activities and military activities would continue to be managed through existing regulations. Pelagic fishing, netting, static gear fishing, sailing, sea angling, diving, shipping and transit of vessels are known to take place in the site but at their current levels would not require additional management.

The above applies only to the recommended Marine Conservation Zone, which is separate to the Proposed Co-location Zone. However, the Regional Stakeholder Group has stated that negotiations should continue with the nearby wind farm developers in an effort to agree that the Proposed Co-location Zone could also be recommended as a Marine Conservation Zone.

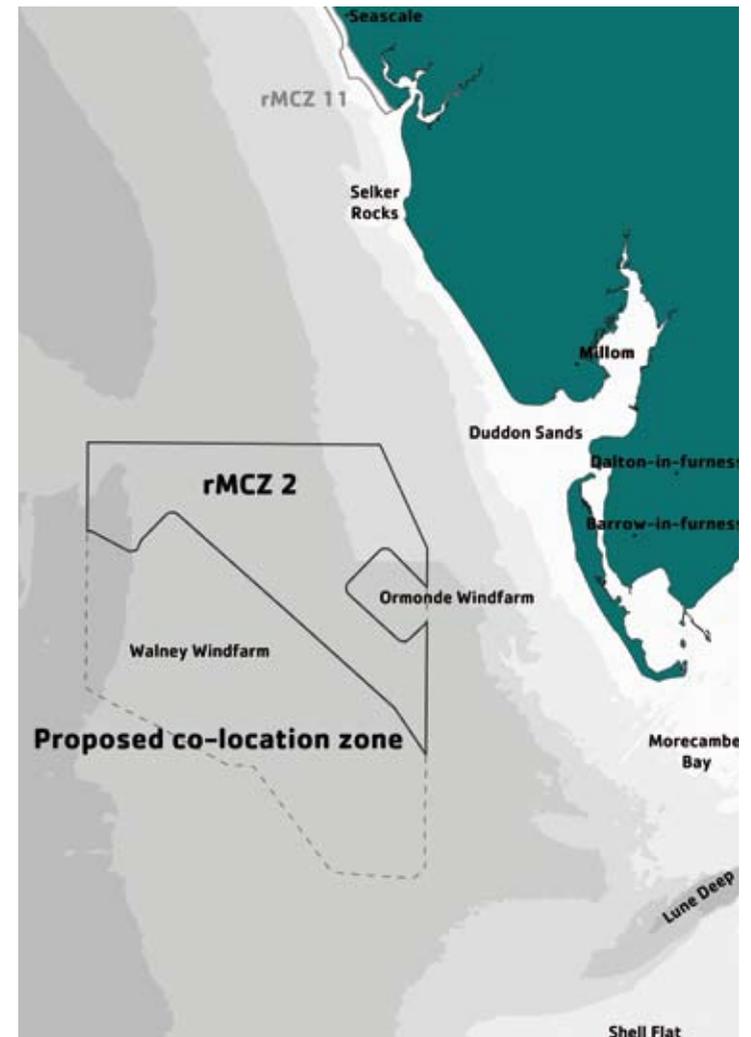
See pages 30-31 for important information on recommended Reference Areas.



Windfarm



Hermit crab



Recommended MCZ  
Scale: 1:150,000

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1:210,000

**rMCZ**  
Recommended Marine Conservation Zone

**rRA**  
Recommended Reference Areas

## Recommended Marine Conservation Zone 3: North St George's Channel

The North St George's Channel Marine Conservation Zone is located approximately 25km northwest of Anglesey between the territorial waters of Wales and the Republic of Ireland. It covers around 1,388km<sup>2</sup>.

The Regional Stakeholder Group identified this offshore area because of the diversity of deeper water seabed types it covers, including glacial drumlins. The tide-swept rock in deep water is one of only two examples in the project area. It also includes the Croker Carbonate Slabs, carbonate structures formed by methane gas leaking from the seabed, which support rich marine life including the Ross worm, Ross coral and sponges.

This zone was identified to protect a variety of habitats and species, including rock habitats, subtidal mixed and coarse sediments, subtidal sands and gravels and horse mussel beds. The aim is to maintain most of these habitats and features in their current condition, although the aim is for subtidal sands and gravels and horse mussel beds to recover to a favourable condition.

According to the recommendations, benthic and static gear fishing at their current levels would require additional management in part of this zone. Telecommunication and power cables, wind farms and military activities would continue to be managed through existing regulations. Pelagic fishing, netting, dredge fishing, fishing with hooks and lines, shipping and transit of vessels are known to take place in the site but at their current levels would not require additional management.

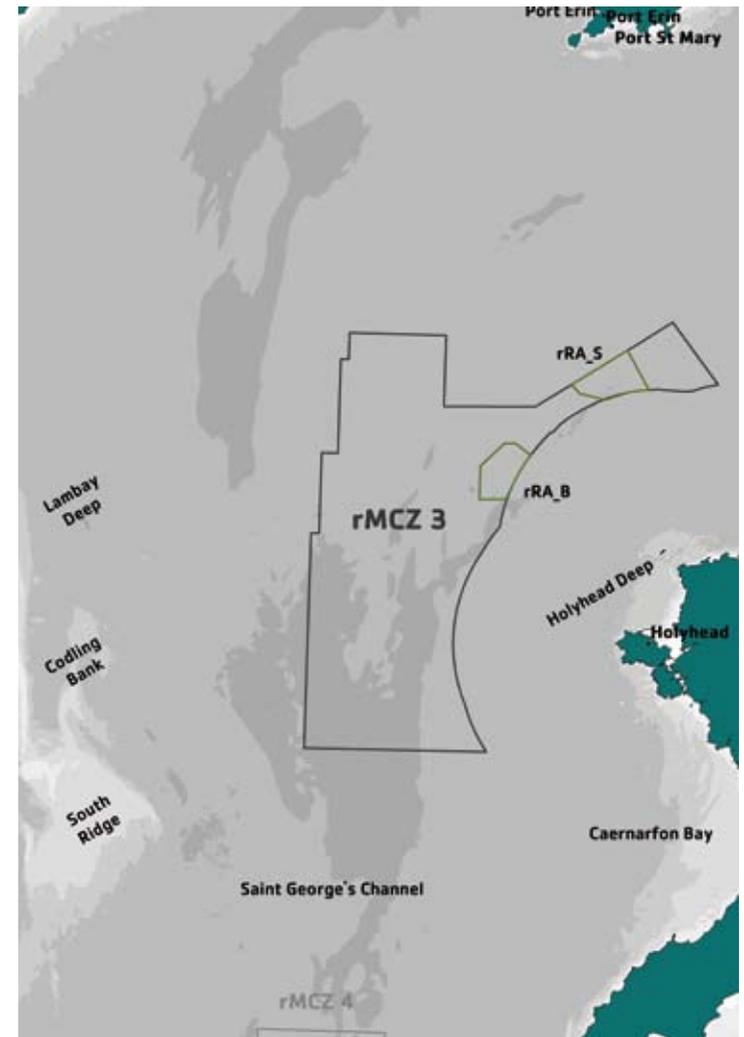
See pages 30–31 for important information on recommended Reference Areas.



Dead mens fingers



Plaice



Recommended MCZ  
Scale: 1:150,000

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1:500,000

**rMCZ**  
Recommended Marine Conservation Zone

**rRA**  
Recommended Reference Areas

## Recommended Marine Conservation Zone 4: Mid St George's Channel

The Mid St George's Channel Marine Conservation Zone is roughly 30km from north to south and between 20 to 30km from east to west. It covers an area of 761km<sup>2</sup>. The zone lies between the territorial waters of Wales and the Republic of Ireland.

The most extensive habitats in the zone are sand and gravel sediments, which are dominated by populations of annelid worms, clams and crustaceans. From surveys of similar habitats close to this zone, the deep water boulders and cobbles present are thought to support diverse marine life including sea fans, anemones and sponges. The zone lies in an area that is highly productive due to the thermal fronts that form within it.

The Regional Stakeholder Group identified this zone to protect a variety of habitats and species, including moderate energy circalittoral rock, subtidal coarse sediment, subtidal mixed sediment and subtidal sands and gravels. The aim is for most of these habitats and features to recover to a favourable condition.

According to the recommendations, at its current level benthic fishing would require additional management within the site. Military activities in the zone would continue to be managed through existing regulations. Pelagic, static gear and dredge fishing, as well as hook and line fishing and netting, are known to take place in the site, but at their current levels would not require additional management. Angling, sailing, shipping and transit of vessels would also not require additional management at their current levels.

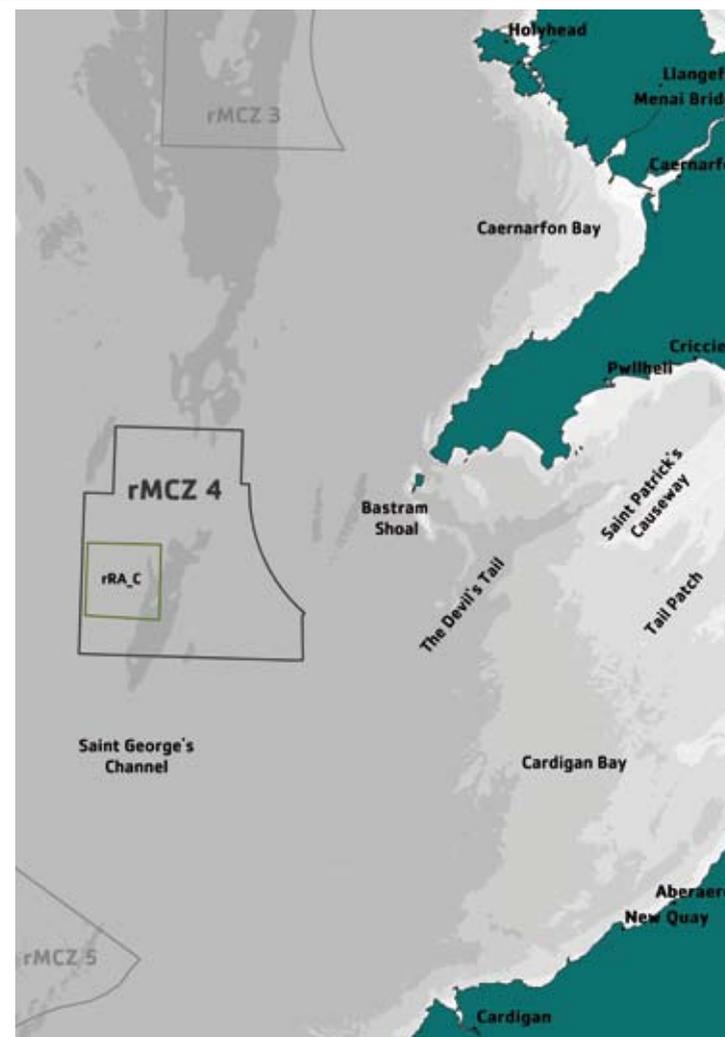
See pages 30–31 for important information on recommended Reference Areas.



Subtidal mixed sediments



Plumose anemone



Recommended MCZ

Scale: 1:150,000

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NOT TO BE USED FOR NAVIGATION.

1:500,000

rMCZ  
Recommended Marine Conservation Zone

rRA  
Recommended Reference Areas

## Recommended Marine Conservation Zone 5: North of Celtic Deep

The North of Celtic Deep Marine Conservation Zone is the southern-most site in the project area. It covers an area of approximately 656km<sup>2</sup>. The zone lies between the territorial waters of Wales and the Republic of Ireland.

The deep water sediments in this zone support richly diverse and abundant populations of marine invertebrates. Worms, clams and crustaceans are present in large numbers and in turn provide food for populations of fish. The area is of high biological productivity due to thermal fronts and provides important foraging grounds for seabirds, whales and dolphins.

The Regional Stakeholder Group identified the North of Celtic Deep Zone to protect habitats of subtidal sand, gravels and coarse sediment and moderate energy rock habitats. The aim is to recover all of these habitats and features to a favourable condition.

According to the recommendations, at its current level benthic fishing would require additional management within the site. Telecommunications and power cable activities would continue to be managed through existing regulations. Netting, hook and line fishing and dredge fishing, along with sailing, shipping and transit of vessels, are known to take place in the site but at their current levels would not require additional management.

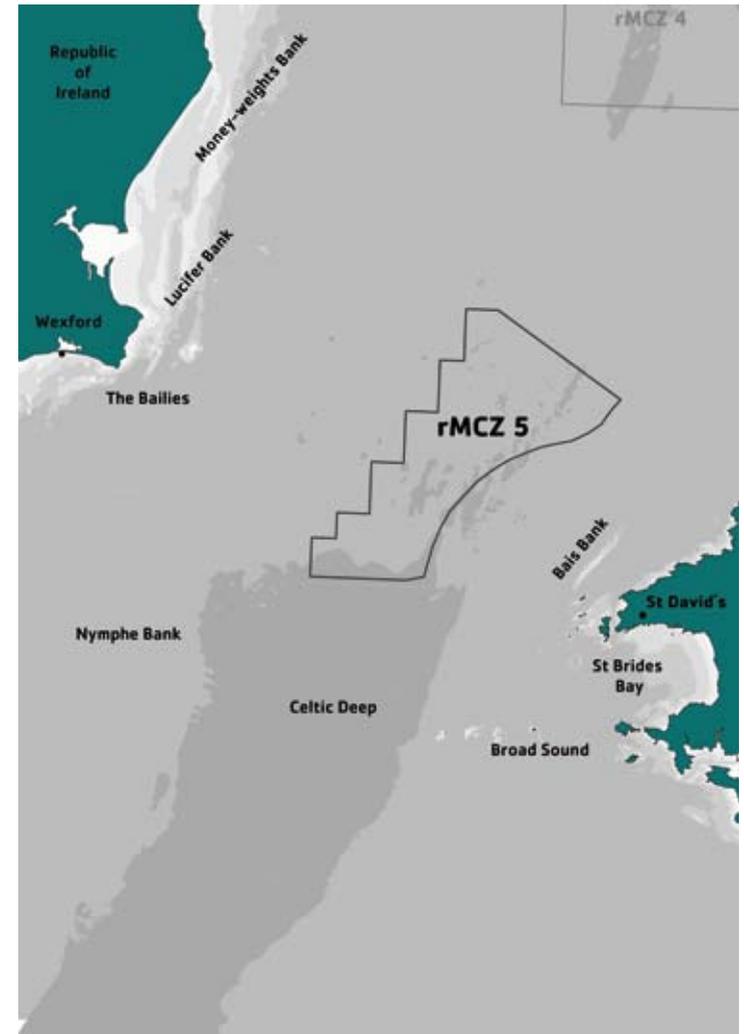
See pages 30-31 for important information on recommended Reference Areas.



Starfish



Subtidal coarse sediment



Recommended MCZ  
Scale: 1:150,000

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1:500,000

rMCZ  
Recommended Marine Conservation Zone

rRA  
Recommended Reference Areas

## Recommended Marine Conservation Zone 6: South Rigg

The South Rigg Marine Conservation Zone is around 18km from north to south and covers an area of roughly 58km<sup>2</sup>. It is located to the north of the Slieve Na Griddle zone (rMCZ 7), between the Isle of Man and Northern Ireland.

The Irish Sea Mounds are a complex of rock outcrops on the seafloor, surrounded and partly covered by mud sediments. The rocky outcrops support sea anemones, brittle stars, sea fans and a sea mat turf. The surrounding mud sediments are dominated by burrowing Dublin Bay prawn (*Nephrops*) and tube worms, with slender sea pens, heart urchins and mud shrimps present. Subtidal sand habitats in the northeast corner of the zone support a breeding population of the ocean quahog clam, which is known to live up to 400 years.

The Regional Stakeholder Group identified this zone to protect habitats of subtidal mud and sand, low energy rock habitats, deep water mud habitats, ocean quahogs, sea pens and burrowing megafauna. The aim is to recover all of these habitats and species to a favourable condition.

According to the recommendations, at their current levels benthic and dredge fishing would require additional management within the site. Telecommunication and power cables, shipping and military activities in the zone would continue to be managed through existing regulations. Pelagic fishing and transit of vessels are known to take place in the site but at their current levels would not require additional management.

See pages 30-31 for important information on recommended Reference Areas.



Fishing boats © Rowan Byrne



Ocean quahog



Recommended MCZ  
Scale: 1:150,000

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NOT TO BE USED FOR NAVIGATION.

1:350,000

rMCZ  
Recommended Marine Conservation Zone

rRA  
Recommended Reference Areas

## Recommended Marine Conservation Zone 7: Slieve Na Griddle

The Slieve Na Griddle Marine Conservation Zone is approximately 7.6km in length from north to south and 10km from east to west. It covers an area of approximately 58km<sup>2</sup>. The site is around 25km south of the South Rigg zone (rMCZ 6) and both sites contain similar habitats of mud and rock.

This zone includes the Pisces Reef Complex, a series of reefs made up of rock and boulders that rise 15–35m above the surrounding seabed. The zone also includes the mud seabed between and around the reefs, which forms part of the large but geographically isolated mud patch in the Western Irish Sea. These muddy sediments support communities of large burrowing animals including Dublin Bay prawns (Nephrops), and the area is part of an important fishery. Other species include brittle stars and heart urchins. The reefs themselves are also a proposed Special Area of Conservation.

The Regional Stakeholder Group identified this zone to protect mud habitats in deep water, subtidal mud and low energy circalittoral rock. The aim is to recover all of these habitats and features to a favourable condition.

According to the recommendations, at its current level benthic fishing would require additional management in this zone. Telecommunication and power cables and military activities would continue to be managed through existing regulations. Pelagic fishing, fishing with hooks and lines, shipping and transit of vessels are known to take place in the site but at their current levels would not require additional management.

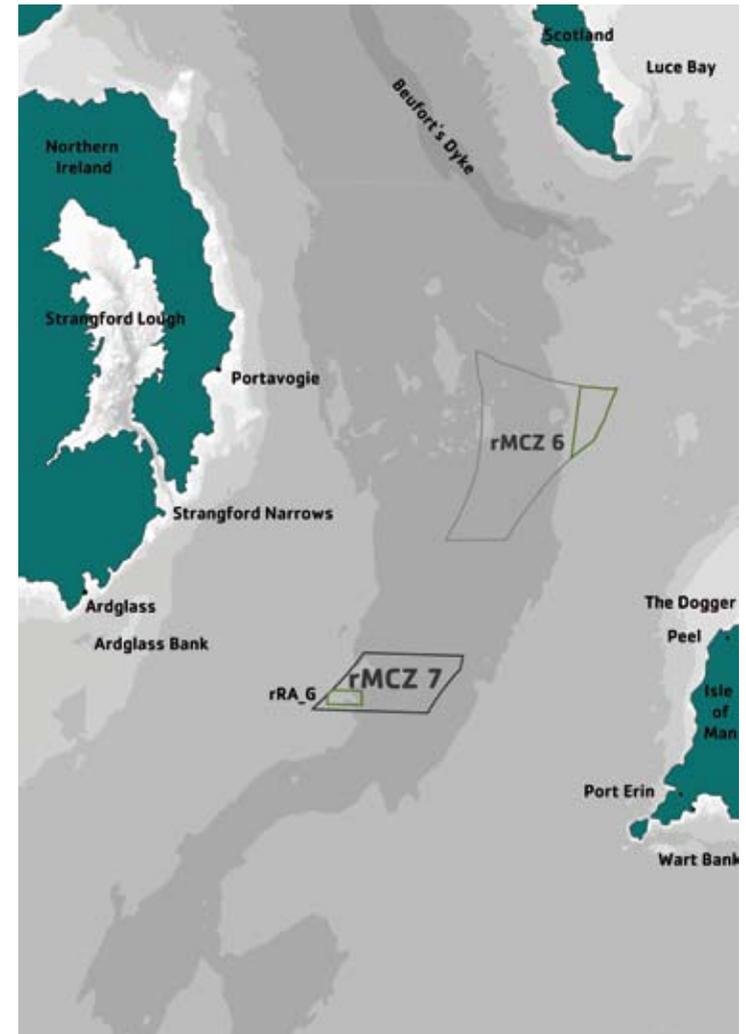
See pages 30–31 for important information on recommended Reference Areas.



Cup sponge and featherstar



Dublin Bay prawn



Recommended MCZ  
Scale: 1:150,000

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NOT TO BE USED FOR NAVIGATION.

1:350,000

rMCZ  
Recommended Marine Conservation Zone

rRA  
Recommended Reference Areas

## Recommended Marine Conservation Zone 8: Fylde Offshore

The Fylde Offshore Marine Conservation Zone is located off the Ribble Estuary, around 3.6km from the Fylde Coast. It covers an area of roughly 260km<sup>2</sup>.

The zone overlaps with part of the large Liverpool Bay Special Protection Area (SPA), classified to protect its internationally important populations of red throated diver and common scoter, a diving duck. The highly productive sand and gravel seabed supports a diversity of marine life. As prey species for the SPA birds, the rich bivalve populations, sand eels and other small fish are already afforded some protection. The animals living within the seabed support populations of flatfish, rays and gurnard, as well as swimming crabs, hermit crabs and other crustaceans.

The Regional Stakeholder Group identified this zone to protect habitats of subtidal sands and gravels. The aim is to maintain these habitats in their current condition.

According to the recommendations, none of the activities currently known to take place in the Fylde Offshore Zone would require additional management. Telecommunication and power cable activities would continue to be managed through existing regulations. Potting, netting and benthic and dredge fishing are known to take place in the site but at their current levels would not require additional management. Angling, diving, sailing, shipping and transit of vessels would also not require additional management at their current levels.

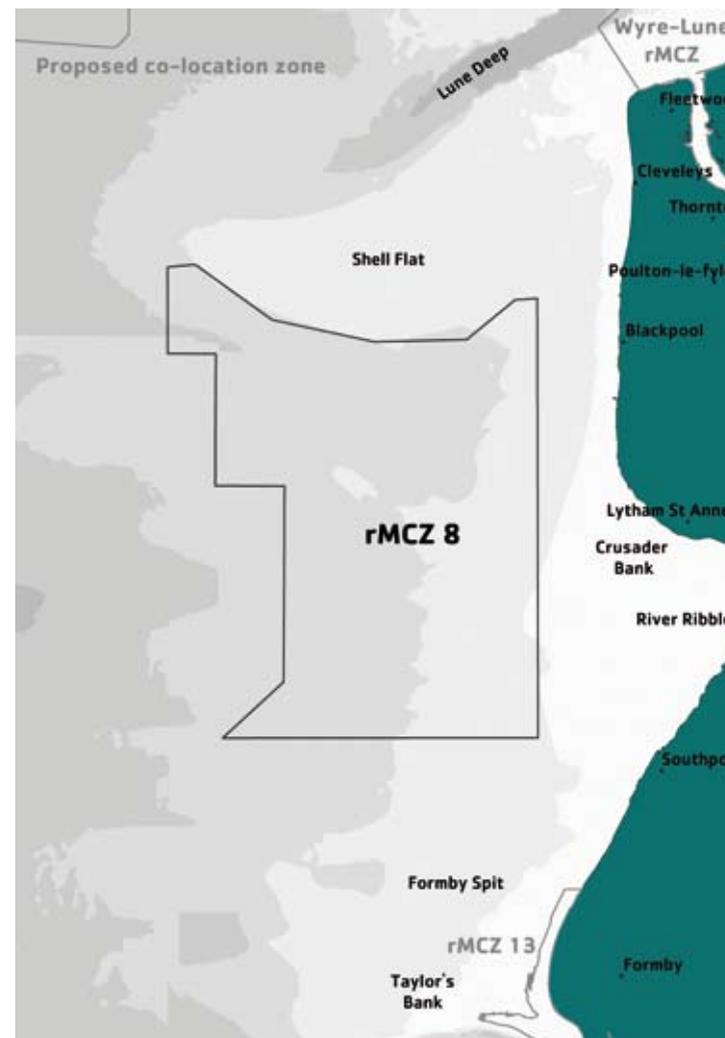
See pages 30-31 for important information on recommended Reference Areas.



Plaice



Scoters © Mark Hamblin / rspb-images.com



Recommended MCZ

Scale: 1:150,000

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NOT TO BE USED FOR NAVIGATION.

1:168,000

rMCZ  
Recommended Marine Conservation Zone

rRA  
Recommended Reference Areas

## Recommended Marine Conservation Zone 10: Allonby Bay

The Allonby Bay Marine Conservation Zone is situated on the Cumbrian coast and is the most northerly in the project area. It extends from the mean high water (springs) mark approximately 5.5km offshore and covers roughly 39km<sup>2</sup>.

Within the zone, Dubmill Scar includes one of the best examples of honeycomb worm reefs in Cumbria and the UK. The scar also supports blue mussel beds and a rich diversity of marine life. The zone also includes part of Maryport Roads, an area of shallow subtidal 'cobbles'. These honeycomb worm reefs also support breadcrumb sponges, baked bean ascidians, kelp, oarweed, sea lettuce, sea mats and crabs.

The Regional Stakeholder Group identified this zone to protect a variety of habitats and species including intertidal rock, honeycomb worm reefs, blue mussel beds, peat and clay exposures and subtidal sand, gravel and coarse sediments. The aim is to maintain these features in their current condition.

According to the recommendations, at their existing levels no activities that currently take place in the site would require additional management. Coastal defences, aquaculture and consented discharges would continue to be managed through existing regulations. Netting, potting and hand gathering of shellfish, as well as benthic and dredge fishing, are known to take place in the site but at their current levels would not require additional management. Similarly, at their current levels angling, diving, sailing, transit of vessels and use of the beach would not require additional management.

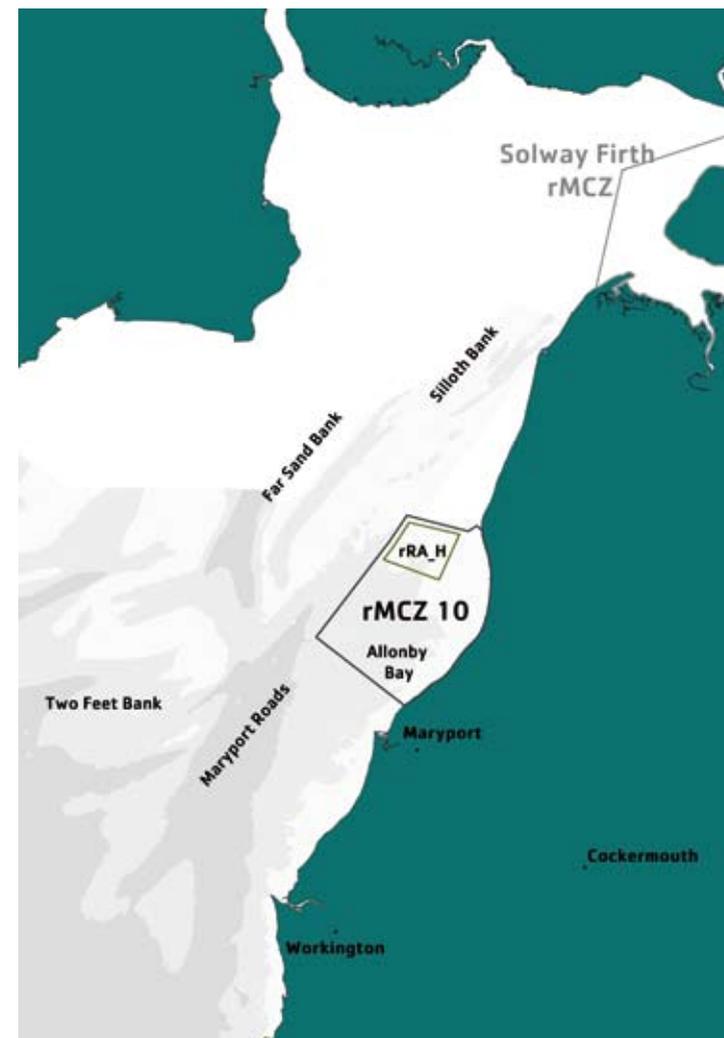
See pages 30–31 for important information on recommended Reference Areas.



Allonby Bay



Honeycomb worm reef



Recommended MCZ

Scale: 1:150,000

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NOT TO BE USED FOR NAVIGATION.

1:160,000

**rMCZ**  
Recommended Marine Conservation Zone

**rRA**  
Recommended Reference Areas

## Recommended Marine Conservation Zone 11: Cumbria Coast

The Cumbria Coast Marine Conservation Zone extends roughly 27km from just north of St. Bees Head south to the Ravenglass Estuary. It extends from the mean high water mark to the mean low water mark, apart from around St. Bees Head where it extends 1km from the mean high water mark.

The bedrock and boulder shores around St. Bees Head are nationally important, rich in marine life and unique within the Irish Sea project area. The cobble and boulder scars support extensive honeycomb worms reefs and blue mussel beds. The sandy seafloor supports rich communities of burrowing animals. The cliffs at St. Bees Head support around 10,000 pairs of breeding seabirds, including England's only breeding colony of Black Guillemots. The zone includes the waters around St. Bees Head specifically to benefit Black Guillemots.

The Regional Stakeholder Group identified this zone to protect high energy intertidal rock, sand and muddy sand, peat and clay exposures, boulder habitats, high energy infralittoral rock, honeycomb worm reefs, blue mussel beds and the Black Guillemot. The aim is maintain most of these habitats and species in their current condition, but to recover some of them to a favourable condition.

According to the recommendations, at their existing levels static gear fishing, gill netting, hand gathering of shellfish and vessel speeds would require additional management in some parts of the zone. Coastal defences, consented discharges and power plants would continue to be managed through existing regulations. At current levels, benthic, pelagic and dredge fishing would not require additional management. Angling, diving, sailing, shipping, transit of vessels and use of the beach would also be unaffected at their current levels.

See pages 30–31 for important information on recommended Reference Areas



Black Guillemot © Chris Gomersall / rspb-images.com



Starfish © Dr Jane Lancaster



Recommended MCZ  
Scale: 1:150,000

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NOT TO BE USED FOR NAVIGATION.

1:90,000

rMCZ  
Recommended Marine Conservation Zone

rRA  
Recommended Reference Areas

## Recommended Marine Conservation Zone 13: Sefton Coast

The Sefton Coast Marine Conservation Zone is situated on the Sefton Coast between Formby Point and Crosby Beach. The site covers roughly 13km<sup>2</sup> of the intertidal zone, extending from the mean high water mark to the mean low water mark.

The exposed peat and clay beds on this part of the coast are considered to be superb examples of habitats that are uncommon. They form a home for burrowing clams called piddocks, as well as crabs, mussels, periwinkles and worms. These peat and clay beds were also identified for their archaeological interest. Composed of former lake bed sediments and ancient forested peat land, preserved within them are human and animal footprints dating back to the Stone Age.

The Regional Stakeholder Group identified this zone to protect its peat and clay exposures, with the aim of recovering them to a favourable condition.

According to the recommendations, at its existing level benthic fisheries would require additional management on the peat and clay exposures. Use of the beach may also require additional management where there are peat and clay exposures. Sea defence work in the zone would continue to be managed through existing regulations. Hand gathering of shellfish, netting, angling, bait digging, sailing, use of the beach and transit of vessels are all known to take place in the site but at their current levels would not require additional management.

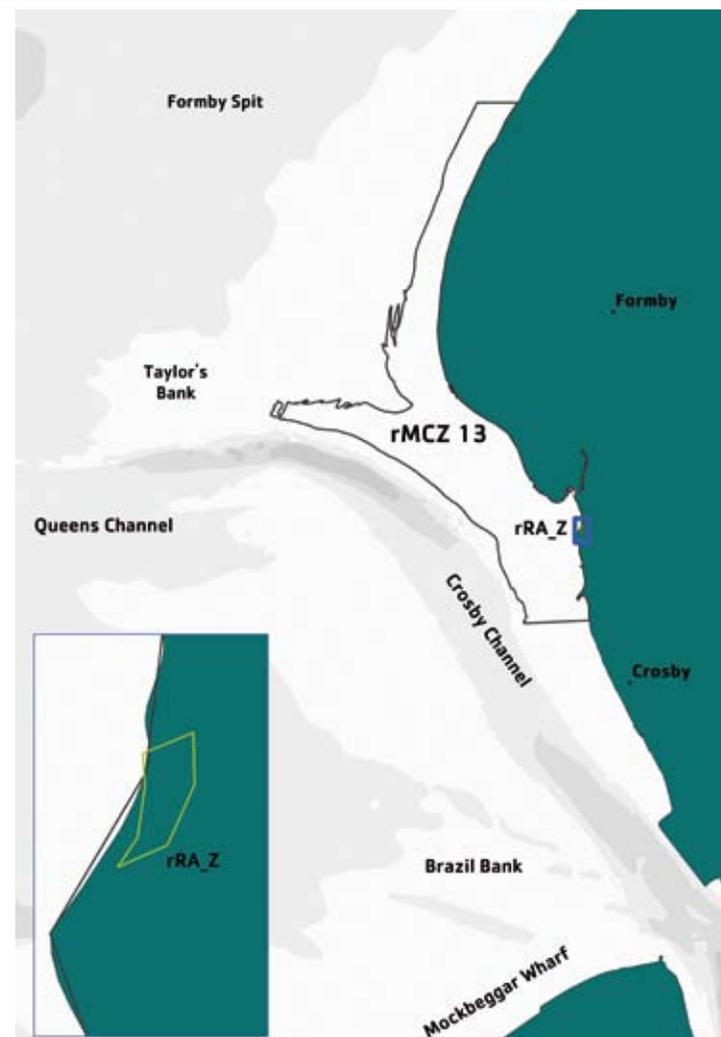
See pages 30-31 for important information on recommended Reference Areas.



Formby Beach



Ancient footprints



Recommended MCZ

Scale: 1:150,000

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NOT TO BE USED FOR NAVIGATION.

1:70,000

rMCZ  
Recommended Marine Conservation Zone

rRA  
Recommended Reference Areas

## Recommended Marine Conservation Zone 14: Hilbre Island Group

At 5km<sup>2</sup> the Hilbre Island Group Marine Conservation Zone is the smallest in the project area. It is focused around three islands in the mouth of the River Dee that are connected to the mainland at low tide, when they can be reached on foot. This is a popular activity for tourists.

The peat and clay exposures in this zone are home to burrowing clams called piddocks. The holes they create provide an important micro-habitat for species such as crabs and anemones.

The Regional Stakeholder Group identified this zone to protect blue mussel beds and the exposed peat and clay beds. The aim is for these species and habitats to recover to a favourable condition.

According to the recommendations, at their current levels hand gathering of shellfish, walking, horse riding and general access to the islands may require additional management, but only in areas where peat and clay exposures or blue mussel beds are present. Telecommunication and power cable activities would continue to be managed through existing regulations. Benthic fisheries, netting, angling, bait digging, sailing, use of the beach and transit of vessels would not require additional management as long as they avoid the peat and clay exposures and blue mussel beds.

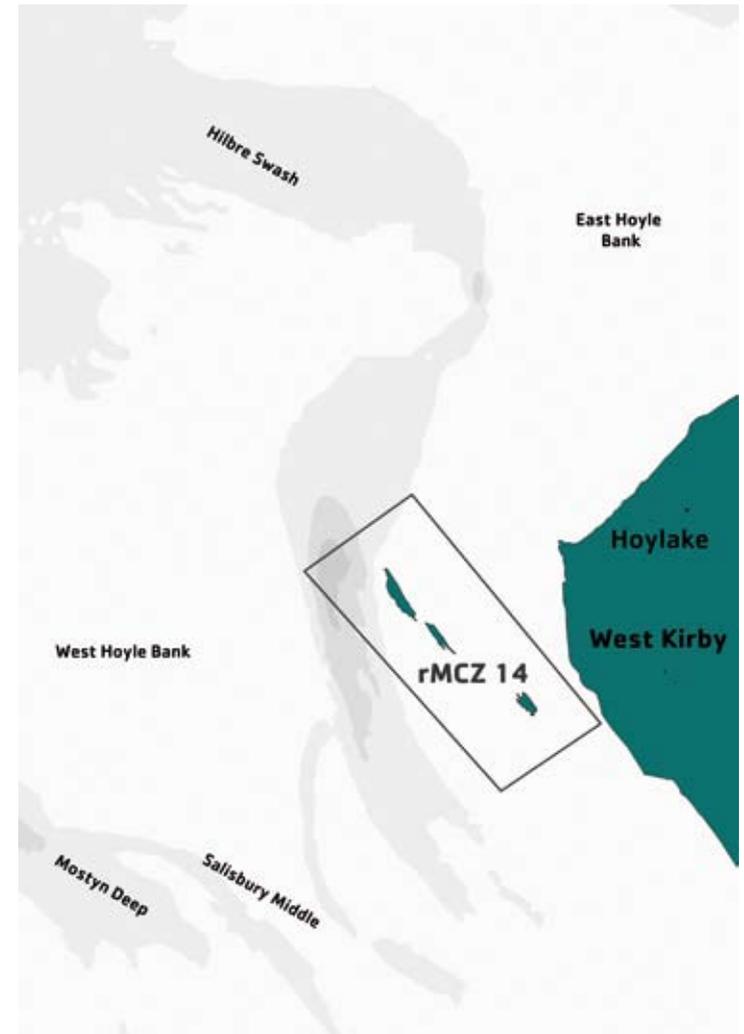
See pages 30-31 for important information on recommended Reference Areas.



Captain Kenny



Hilbre Island © Dave Willis



Recommended MCZ  
Scale: 1:150,000

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NOT TO BE USED FOR NAVIGATION.

1:40,000

rMCZ  
Recommended Marine Conservation Zone

rRA  
Recommended Reference Areas

## Recommended estuarine Marine Conservation Zones

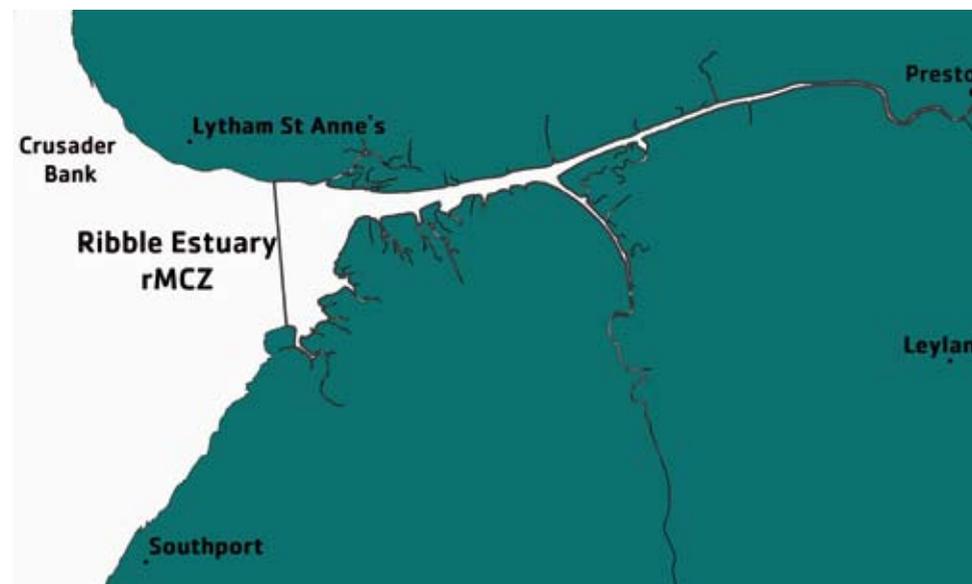
The Marine Conservation Zones that were recommended by the project's Regional Stakeholder Group aim to meet the requirements of the Ecological Network Guidance. This guidance sets out to make sure Marine Conservation Zones are ecologically beneficial.

According to this guidance, amongst other species Marine Conservation Zones should aim to protect three highly mobile species of bony fish: smelt, European eel and undulate ray. It would be particularly beneficial to protect the important spawning, nursery and foraging grounds for these species.

For smelt and European eel, river estuaries are often vital spawning, nursery and foraging grounds. As a result, the Regional Stakeholder Group has identified three river estuaries as recommended Marine Conservation Zones – Ribble, Wyre / Lune and the Solway Firth.

According to the recommendations, no additional management would be required in Marine Conservation Zones that have been identified to protect smelt and European eels in estuaries.

## Ribble Estuary recommended Marine Conservation Zone



## Solway Firth recommended Marine Conservation Zone



## Lune and Wyre Estuaries recommended Marine Conservation Zone



## Recommended Reference Areas

Recommended Reference Areas are a different kind of Marine Conservation Zones that aim to reach an 'unimpacted' condition that is as close to natural as possible. The condition of other Marine Conservation Zones can then be compared to them, helping to show how well the protection measures within the other zones are working.

Recommended Reference Areas tend to be smaller than other zones, but because the aim is for them to be in very good condition, impacts from human activities need to be kept to a minimum. This means that there would be more restrictions on the activities that can take place within Reference Areas than in other Marine Conservation Zones.

No extractive or depositional activities would be permitted within Reference Areas.

However, most potentially disturbing or damaging activities would be permitted within Reference Areas, as long as measures were put in place to manage them and mitigate their impacts.

Guidance from the Irish Sea project's national partners said there should be at least one recommended Reference Area for each of the habitats and species that Marine Conservation Zones aim to protect. The project's Regional Stakeholder Group has identified Reference Areas for most of these, but not all.

## Activities that would be managed or not permitted in Reference Areas

Extractive (not permitted)	Depositional (not permitted)	Potentially damaging or disturbing (managed)
Aquaculture	Aquaculture	Anchorage or mooring
Catch and release angling	Catch and release angling	Low flying aircraft
Commercial fishing	Commercial fishing	Maintenance and operation of existing structures
Construction of structures	Construction of structures	Motorised boating
Oil or gas exploration	Oil or gas exploration	Navigation or transit of vessels
Oil or gas operation	Oil or gas operation	Non-motorised boating
Military activities	Military activities	Other recreational pursuits
Recreational angling	Recreational angling	Personal water craft
Dredging	Disposal of dredge spoil	Point source discharges
Beachcombing	Deposition of gravel or rock	Ports and harbours
Collection of flora and fauna		Science research
Collection of natural materials		
Collection of marine curios		

## Inshore Recommended Reference Areas

The following maps show inshore recommended Reference Areas only. For locations of offshore Reference Areas, see the previous maps of recommended Marine Conservation Zones.

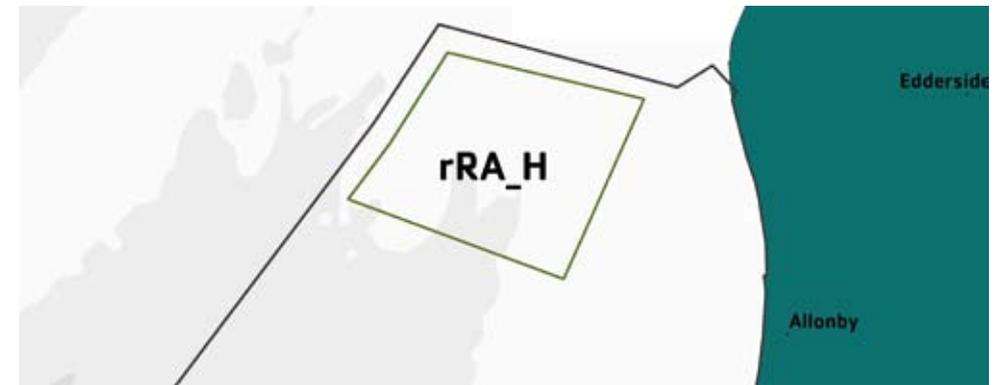
### Inshore Recommended Reference Areas I and J



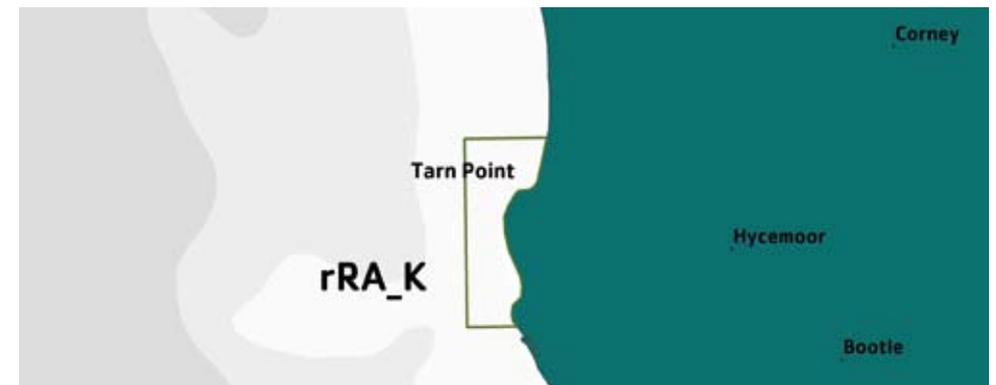
### Inshore Recommended Reference Areas Y and W



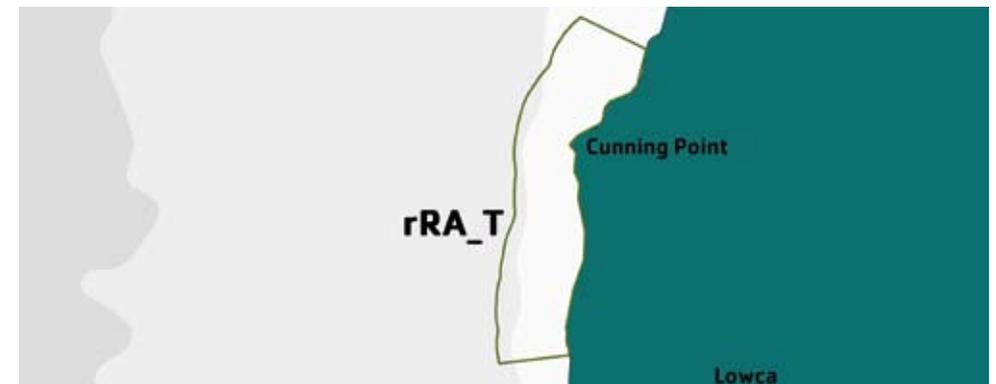
## Inshore Recommended Reference Area H



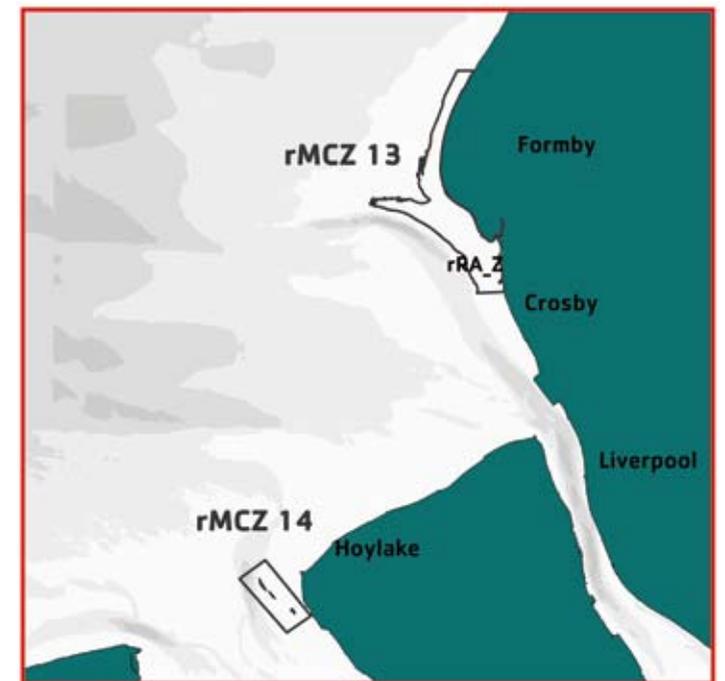
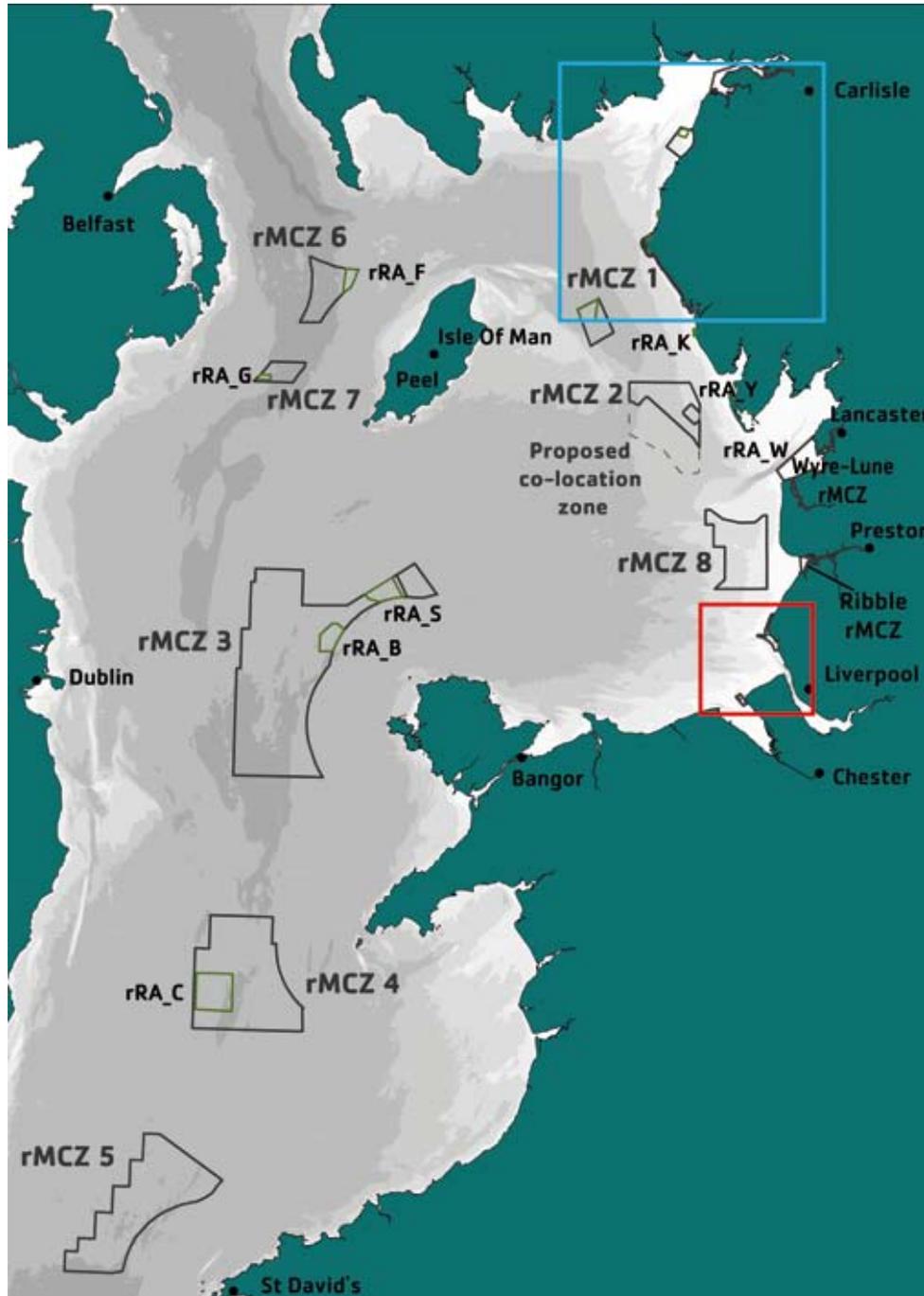
## Inshore Recommended Reference Area K



## Inshore Recommended Reference Area T



Recommended Marine Conservation Zones and Reference Areas



rMCZ  
Recommended Marine  
Conservation Zone

rRA  
Recommended  
Reference Areas

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## Next Steps

The Government is committed to creating an ecologically coherent network of Marine Protected Areas in the UK, which will include Marine Conservation Zones alongside other forms of marine protection.

The Regional Stakeholder Group of the Irish Sea Conservation Zones project completed its final recommendations for Marine Conservation Zones in July 2011. At the end of August 2011 these were presented to the independent Science Advisory Panel, as well as to Natural England and the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC).

The Science Advisory Panel will review the final recommendations. It will assess how well they meet the Government's guidance on the ecological performance of Marine Conservation Zones and report its findings. Natural England and JNCC will also provide their assessment and advice about the recommended Marine Conservation Zones to the Government.

Over the next few months, the project team will continue to work on an impact assessment. Amongst other things, this will assess the economic, social and environmental impacts of designating the recommended Marine Conservation Zones.

Once the final recommendations, impact assessment and statutory advice have been received, Ministers will consider which sites to put forward for public consultation. This will be an opportunity for people to feedback to the Government on the proposed designations before they are finalised.

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## Timetable

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### 31 August 2011

Final recommendations for Marine Conservation Zones submitted

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### September/October 2011

Science Advisory Panel reviews the recommendations

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### To Follow

Impact Assessment submitted to the Government

Advice from Natural England and JNCC submitted to the Government

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### To Follow

Public consultation on the sites the Government proposes to designate

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## More information about the Irish Sea Conservation Zones project

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W: [www.irishseaconservation.org.uk](http://www.irishseaconservation.org.uk)

For more information about the MCZ designation process after  
August 31st you can email [mczproject@jncc.gov.uk](mailto:mczproject@jncc.gov.uk) or visit:

[www.naturalengland.org.uk](http://www.naturalengland.org.uk)

[jncc.defra.gov.uk](http://jncc.defra.gov.uk)

[www.defra.gov.uk](http://www.defra.gov.uk)

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## Project partners



**Envirolink**

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## Sister projects



[www.netgainmcz.org](http://www.netgainmcz.org)



[www.finding-sanctuary.org](http://www.finding-sanctuary.org)



[www.balancedseas.org](http://www.balancedseas.org)

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