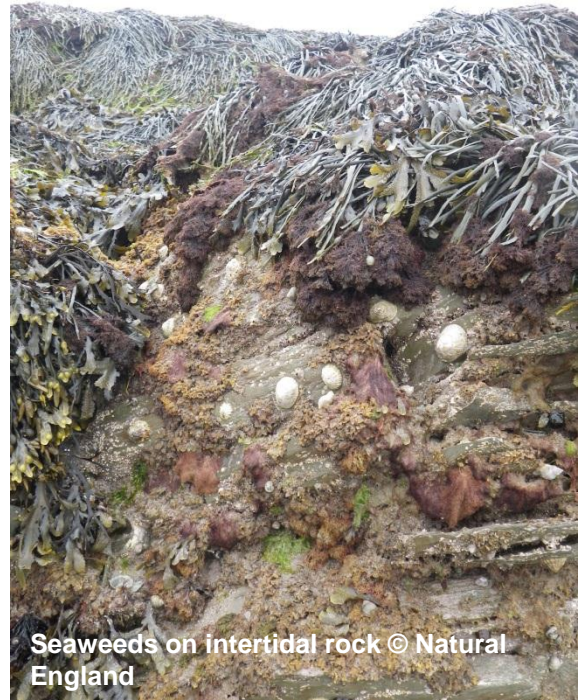


# Whitsand and Looe Bay Marine Conservation Zone

## Where is this site?

The Whitsand and Looe Bay MCZ is an inshore site located off the south coast of Cornwall. The landward site boundary follows the coastline along the mean high water mark, from Hore Stone near Talland Bay in the west, to a point between Queener Point and Long Cove on Rame Head in the east. The seaward boundary is formed by a straight line across the bay, with a small extension jutting out to the south around Looe Island. The site covers an area of 52 km<sup>2</sup> and is 25 metres deep at the deepest point.



Seaweeds on intertidal rock © Natural England

## Why is this site important?

Whitsand Bay is a 6 km stretch of sand and shingle with gullies that have been carved by strong tides and cross-currents. The site contains subtidal sand and coarse sediment habitats, as well as intertidal rocky habitats at Hannafore and on Looe Island which support a high diversity of seaweeds and invertebrates. The ocean quahog (*Arctica islandica*), a long-lived bivalve which is known to live for over 400 years has been recorded within sediment habitats in the site. Within the shallower part of the site the seagrass beds are likely to provide a nursery ground for ecologically and commercially important species such as cuttlefish. Further out to sea there are shipwrecks and small areas of subtidal rocky reef that support pink sea-fans and rare sea-fan anemones.



Intertidal moderate energy rock © Natural England

## What does this Marine Conservation Zone protect?

This MCZ protects eight habitats and their associated species as well as offering specific protection to four species of conservation importance. The sediment communities support populations of bivalves and marine worms and provide habitats for commercially important fish and shellfish, while the site's intertidal rocky habitats are characterised by animals such as sponges and sea squirts. These rocky habitats also support commercially important species such as common lobster and crab. Additionally, the intertidal rock at this site provides an important natural defence against coastal erosion.

The pink sea-fan (*Eunicella verrucosa*) is an extremely slow-growing soft coral which attaches to hard substrates such as subtidal rocky reefs and or wrecks. Many species can be found living on or around the pink sea-fan structures including the sea-fan anemone (*Amphianthus dohrnii*), which is also protected within this site.

The sea-fan anemone only reaches around 1 cm in diameter. Its disk-like body is fringed by up to 80 short tentacles that are pink, orange or red in colour and usually streaked or splashed with white. The sea-fan anemone does not usually attach directly to the seabed but instead lives with its base wrapped around a host organism, usually a pink sea-fan. Both the pink sea-fan and the sea-fan anemone are particularly vulnerable to damage.



Sea-fan anemone on Pink sea-fan © Paul Kay

Stalked jellyfish (*Haliclystus auricula*) are also present within the site. These animals are very small and typically spend all of their life attached to either seaweed or seagrass. They use the stinging tentacles on the tips of their eight webbed arms to kill or paralyse prey and for defence.



Features	General management approach
Intertidal coarse sediment	Maintain in favourable condition
Intertidal sand and muddy sand	Maintain in favourable condition
Subtidal coarse sediment	Maintain in favourable condition
Subtidal sand	Maintain in favourable condition
Low energy intertidal rock	Maintain in favourable condition
Moderate energy intertidal rock	Maintain in favourable condition
High energy intertidal rock	Maintain in favourable condition
Seagrass beds	Maintain in favourable condition
Ocean quahog ( <i>Arctica islandica</i> )	Maintain in favourable condition
Pink sea-fan ( <i>Eunicella verrucosa</i> )	Recover to favourable condition
Sea-fan anemone ( <i>Amphianthus dohrnii</i> )	Recover to favourable condition
Stalked jellyfish ( <i>Haliclystus auricula</i> )	Maintain in 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](http://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 ports and harbour operations and commercial fisheries. Licensable activities such as port operations will be regulated through the appropriate licensing regimes. MCZ designation will need to be taken into consideration when assessing environmental impacts of marine works as part of the licensing application process.

With regards to fisheries management the site is within the jurisdiction of Cornwall IFCA. All relevant IFCA District-wide byelaws will apply to this site, in addition to all relevant national and EU fisheries legislation.

Further information is available at:

[www.marinemanagement.org.uk/fisheries/monitoring/regulations\\_bluebook.htm](http://www.marinemanagement.org.uk/fisheries/monitoring/regulations_bluebook.htm)

Current relevant restrictions relating to this site include the restrictions on surface netting under existing legacy byelaws. These are being reviewed through the IFCA Byelaw Review process due to report in 2015.

For further information visit [www.cornwall-ifca.gov.uk](http://www.cornwall-ifca.gov.uk)

## 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>



Department  
for Environment  
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## Annex: Management

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