

Chesil Beach and Stennis Ledges Marine Conservation Zone

Where is this site?

Chesil Beach and Stennis Ledges MCZ is an inshore site located off the Dorset coast. It runs along the length of Chesil Beach from Abbotsbury, to Weston on the Isle of Portland in the south-east. The site covers an area of approximately 37 km² and extends seawards to include the reefs of the Stennis Ledges, an area of rocky ridges and rugged seabed.



Why is this site important?

A variety of seabed habitats are found within this site including rock and gravels which can support a wide variety of species. These are being protected as they are representative of our marine environment and previously only had limited protection in the south-west region.

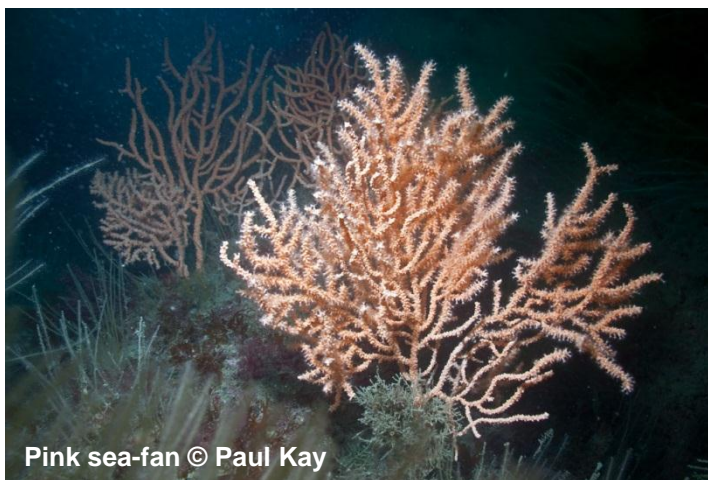


What does this Marine Conservation Zone protect?

The rocky habitats within the MCZ are rich in plants and animals such as sponges and sea mosses, and also provide a suitable habitat for inshore commercial fisheries species, such as common lobster and crab. Native oysters are also found on the rocky habitats within the site. They are under pressure from invasive species such as the slipper limpet and the American oyster drill snail.

Sediments such as gravels, pebbles and coarse sands are also found within the intertidal area of the site. This habitat supports species such as tiny shrimp-like creatures that can live amongst the sediment, and therefore provides an important feeding area for wading birds.

Pink sea-fan is a type of soft coral. It is actually made up of colonies of tiny anemone-like creatures which attach to rocky sea bed habitats and never move during their adult lives. It is extremely slow-growing and so very sensitive to damage.



| Features | General management approach |
|---|----------------------------------|
| Intertidal coarse sediment | Maintain in favourable condition |
| High energy intertidal rock | Maintain in favourable condition |
| Native oyster (<i>Ostrea edulis</i>) | Recover to favourable condition |
| Pink sea-fan (<i>Eunicella verrucosa</i>) | Recover to favourable condition |
| High energy infralittoral rock | 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.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 and ports operations. Port operations 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. Anchorage issues within the inshore area falls within the management responsibilities of the MMO.

With regards to fisheries this site is within the jurisdiction of the Southern IFCA. All Southern 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.marinemangement.org.uk/fisheries/monitoring/regulations_bluebook.htm

Current relevant restrictions relating to this site include the size of the vessel permitted to operate in the area (vessel length), seasonal closures and restrictions on gear for oyster fisheries. Also in place at Stennis Ledge is a local voluntary agreement on dredging to protect sensitive reef features from damage.

For further information visit the IFCA website at www.southern-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>



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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/ |