

Poole Rocks Marine Conservation Zone

Where is this site?

Poole Rocks MCZ is an inshore site covering an area of around 4 km² and is one of the smaller MCZs. It lies to the east of the entrance to Poole Harbour and approximately 2 – 2 ½ km to the east of the beachfront at Sandbanks. The site protects an area of rocky outcrops within the sediment-dominated Poole Bay.



Couch's goby © Lin Bladock

Why is this site important?

Whilst the Poole Rocks MCZ is primarily comprised of silty sand and gravel, the area also contains rocky outcrops which form patch reefs. This type of habitat is often associated with having high species diversity. Both the sediment and rocky habitats also support a variety of commercially important fish species which in turn are an important food source for seabirds.

What does this Marine Conservation Zone protect?

Subtidal mixed sediments can be diverse, ranging from muddy gravelly sands to mosaics of cobbles and pebbles embedded in or lying upon sand, gravel or mud. They support a wide range of animals such as burrowing worms and bivalves that live in the sediment, and star fish and sea urchins that live on the sediment surface.



Moderate energy circalittoral rock © JNCC

The rocky outcrops are often characterised by animal-dominated communities growing on the surface. Species such as worms, sponges, soft and hard corals and bryozoans (sea mosses) can be found, as well as some mobile species in more sheltered areas. These reefs support recreational activities such as diving and angling as well as commercial fishing, particularly for crab and common lobster.

Couch's goby (*Gobius couchi*), a small marine fish which occurs in the MCZ. It is very rare and secretive having only been recorded in 4 locations around the UK. This type of goby is thought to live for about 6 years and can grow up to 9 cm long. It can be found under stones or seaweed on sheltered muddy sand in shallow water, where it feeds on seaweed, bivalves and worms.

Features	General management approach
Subtidal mixed sediments	Maintain in favourable condition
Moderate energy circalittoral rock	Maintain in favourable condition
Couch's goby (<i>Gobius couchi</i>)	Recover to favourable condition
Native oyster (<i>Ostrea edulis</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.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 include port and harbour operations, potential renewable cable laying, disposal of material at sea and commercial fisheries. Most of these activities 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 the 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 such as Cod Recovery measures. For further information visit

www.marinemanagement.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) and seasonal closures and restrictions on gear for oyster fisheries. For further information visit the Southern IFCA website <http://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/