

Thanet Coast Marine Conservation Zone

Where is this site?

Thanet Coast MCZ is an inshore site located on the Kent coast. The site boundary stretches from the east of Herne Bay, around Thanet to the northern wall of Ramsgate harbour. The site protects an area of approximately 64 km². Thanet Coast MCZ partially overlaps with an existing Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and will build upon this designation, protecting features which are not already protected.

Why is this site important?

This MCZ contains the best examples of a variety of features found within the south-east region, including an area of subtidal chalk that extends seawards from the chalk reefs, cliffs and coves already afforded protection by the Thanet Coast SAC. The chalk seabed within the area is the longest continuous stretch of coastal chalk in the UK. This is the only designated MCZ to protect one species of stalked jellyfish (*Lucernariopsis cruxmelitensis*).



Ross worm reef © Natural England

What does this Marine Conservation Zone protect?

The MCZ includes an unusual composition of blue mussel (*Mytilus edulis*) beds and ross worm (*Sabellaria spinulosa*) reefs that have formed a complex intertidal biogenic reef. Living reefs such as this play an important role within the ecosystem as they stabilise mobile sediment. The small habitat niches they provide can then support a range of species which live on or within the sediment pockets. Reefs also play an important role in protecting our coastlines, by reducing the energy of incoming waves and improving water quality through water filtration processes.

The stalked jellyfish (*Lucernariopsis cruxmelitensis*) found within the site is small, reaching less than 1 cm in height. Unlike other species of stalked jellyfish it is rarely attached to seagrasses but instead is typically found on small red seaweeds on rocky shores.



Stalked jellyfish (*Lucernariopsis cruxmelitensis*) © S Trehwellà

Features	General management approach
Subtidal coarse sediment	Maintain in favourable condition
Subtidal mixed sediments	Maintain in favourable condition
Subtidal sand	Maintain in favourable condition
Moderate energy infralittoral rock	Maintain in favourable condition
Moderate energy circalittoral rock	Maintain in favourable condition
Blue mussel (<i>Mytilus edulis</i>) beds	Maintain in favourable condition
Peat and clay exposures	Maintain in favourable condition
Ross worm (<i>Sabellaria spinulosa</i>) reefs	Recover to favourable condition
Subtidal chalk	Maintain in favourable condition
Stalked jellyfish (<i>Haliclystus auricula</i>)	Maintain in favourable condition
Stalked jellyfish (<i>Lucernariopsis cruxmelitensis</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

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, ports and harbour operations and archaeological excavations. 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 management the site is within the jurisdiction of Kent and Essex 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

Relevant restrictions relating to this site include restrictions on the size of the vessels able to operate in the area.

For further information visit the Kent & Essex IFCA website at

<http://www.kentandessex-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/