

Marine Conservation Zone: Selection Assessment Document

Version and Issue date	Amendments made
V1.0 07.09.11	Draft final recommendations refined by the RSG and Local groups in July 2011 and finalised by the RSG 2/3 August 2011.

1. Site name Harwich Haven recommended Reference Area no. 24	3. Site surface area 101 ha 1.01 km ²
2. Site centre location ETRS89 N51 56' 37.792" E1 17' 53.004" N51 56.630' E1 17.883' (N.B. WGS 84 UTM 31N coordinates are provided in the map vertices)	4. Biogeographic region Southern North Sea

5. Features identified for specific protection within the Harwich Haven rRA ¹

Feature type	Feature name	Area ²
Broad-scale habitats	A1.3 Low energy intertidal rock	0.07 km ²
	A2.1 Intertidal coarse sediment	0.02 km ²
Habitat FOCI	Rossworm (<i>Sabellaria spinulosa</i>) reef	0.4 km ²
	Estuarine rocky habitats (marked as Important Plant Area)	1 record
Species FOCI Low	Honeycomb worm (<i>Sabellaria alveolata</i>) reef	0.02 km ²
	Subtidal sands and gravels	0.11 km ²

6. Other features occurring within the Harwich Haven rRA (to be protected)

None

7. Map of site (see below)

8. Site summary

The rRA is an intertidal and subtidal area within the mouth of the Stour and Orwell Estuaries in rMCZ 2 and contains several extremely rare features. Low energy intertidal rock (A1.3) is a regionally scarce broad scale habitat and this is the only place in the project area where it has been possible to capture this FOCI in an rRA.

Although this site is one of only two sites where the Honeycomb worm (*Sabellaria alveolata*) reef biotope has been recorded in the region and where both Rossworm (*Sabellaria spinulosa*) reef and the Honeycomb worm (*Sabellaria alveolata*) reef biotopes have been recorded together (the other site is rMCZ 11.4, Folkestone Pomerania), the site is not primarily for these features, as there are felt to be better examples in rRA 23. However, in this site, the data for *Sabellaria* are intertidal (as opposed to subtidal in 11.4). The project data shows both just east of Harwich, which is supported by data provided by Harwich Haven Authority from Unicomarine surveys. Biological surveys carried out to the south and south-east of Harwich and Felixstowe Harbours (Unicomarine 1993) found much richer fauna, largely based around these *Sabellaria* reefs. The distribution of the Rossworm reef appears to have changed very little between similar surveys (Dyer, 2004), though local stakeholders suggest that the presence of *Sabellaria* is doubtful around the Harwich Haven area (RSG 10, July 2011). Some of the habitat FOCI data have come from EIA surveys in the past, and these may have been displayed cumulatively which would give an imprecise picture of the true distribution of the features. The RSG recommended that the site should be resurveyed. The Wildlife

¹ Sources of information relating to these features are listed in Section 13.

² Areas have been calculated according to spatial GIS data and are indicative only.

sector believes that the point data is indicative of presence and the species may be more widespread than the data suggests.

The site is also notable for its Important Plant Area of Harwich Stone Band (Cementstone) habitat supporting interesting algal communities, which is known only from the Stour, Orwell and Deben Estuaries, though Balanced Seas only have a single record for its occurrence in this site. This feature is a type of the habitat FOCI 'estuarine rocky habitats' and is particularly important for protection here. Subtidal sands and gravels have also been found here from the Unicomarine seabed survey.

9. Detailed site description

For further details please see detailed site description for rMCZ 2.

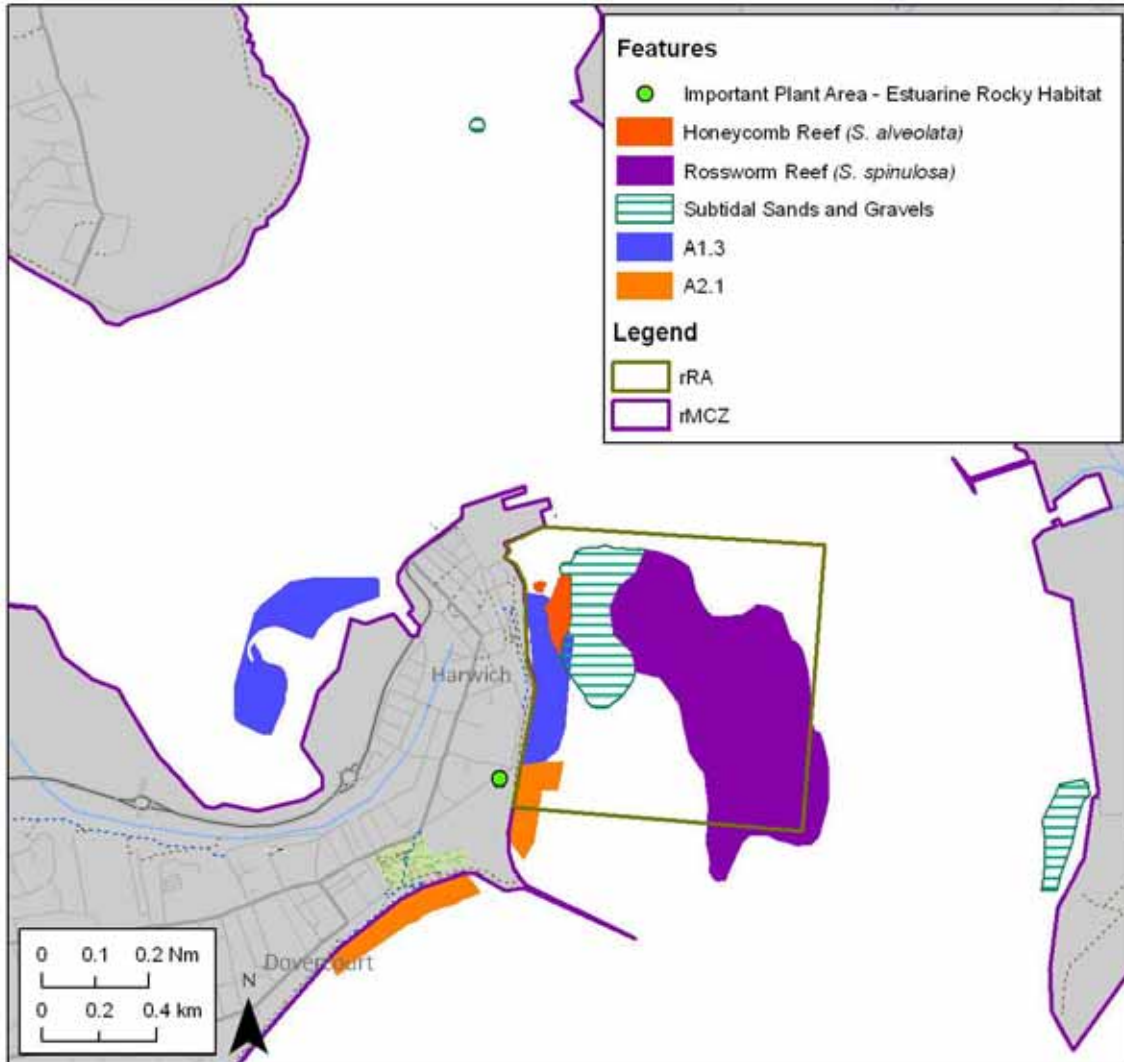
10. Site boundary

The landward side of the site is defined by the Mean High Water mark (from OS data). The boundary is a simple box shape from just below Harwich Haven Jetty running 500m south and 500m offshore.

11. Conservation objectives

Individual conservation objective forms for each feature can be found in Appendix 1. In selecting the reference areas, stakeholders have identified specific features that merit reference area protection. ALL features in a reference area will, by default, have a Conservation Objective of "RECOVER to Reference Condition."

Harwich Haven
Recommended Reference Area no 24



Features to be protected within reference area:

- A1.3 Low energy intertidal rock
- A2.1 Intertidal coarse sediment
- Subtidal Sands and Gravels
- Honeycomb Reef (*S. alveolata*)
- Rossworm Reef (*S. spinulosa*)
- Important Plant Area - Estuarine Rocky Habitat



This map and list show the main features selected by the RSG for inclusion within this Draft Reference Area. However, **ALL** features (including any additional) falling within this area would be given Reference Area protection.

Map and coordinates displayed in WGS84, UTM Zone 31 North.
©OpenStreetMap 2010. ©Ordnance Survey 2010.
©JNCC 2009. ©Crown Copyright 2009.
NOT TO BE USED FOR NAVIGATION.

Harwich Haven rRA no 24

12. Sites to which this site is related

This site falls within the rMCZ 2 Stour and Orwell

13. Supporting documentation (information relating to ENG features only)

Information	Type of information	Source	Name of survey	No of points	Dates
All broad scale habitats	Modelled data	UKSeaMap/MESH v7	Combined	n/a	2011
Rossworm (<i>Sabellaria spinulosa</i>) reef	Survey	Unicomarine (via Harwich Haven Authority)	Stour and Orwell estuaries Annual Benthic Monitoring Report: July 2008 Survey	n/a	July 2008
Estuarine rocky habitats (marked as Important Plant Area)		Kent Wildlife Trust			
Honeycomb worm (<i>Sabellaria alveolata</i>) reef	Survey	Unicomarine (via Harwich Haven Authority)	Stour and Orwell estuaries Annual Benthic Monitoring Report: July 2008 Survey	n/a	July 2008
Subtidal sands and gravels	Survey	Unicomarine (via Harwich Haven Authority)	Stour and Orwell estuaries Annual Benthic Monitoring Report: July 2008 Survey	n/a	July 2008

References

Please refer to the references in the site description of rMCZ 2.

14. Stakeholder support for the site

Local stakeholders had mixed support for the site with some sectors opposing it on the grounds of potential impact to recreational activities. The RSG as a group reached consensus that this site should be put forward in their Final Recommendations due to the strong ecological reasons for the site but recommend that a survey of the area be conducted before designation.

Individual sectors wishing to note their support or concerns about the site recorded the following at the final RSG meeting in August 2011; their comments have been transcribed verbatim from the form that they completed:

SECTOR	ORGANISATION	COMMENT for rRA 24 Harwich Haven
Yachting	RYA	Support providing NE boundary is moved shoreward to exclude recommended yacht track into the estuaries.
Kite Surfing	British Kite Surfing Association	Need more data for support.
Sea Angling		Concerns raised by local RSA on location and impact - need more research. Cannot support.
Ports		Any overlaps with Harwich Haven's dredged approach should be excluded. Otherwise could

Harwich Haven rRA no 24

		support this.
	Local Fisheries Representatives	Data clarification required.
Fishing - FPO, beam trawling		Limited objection by local users.
Offshore renewables	EoN (on behalf of BWEA)	Not discussed on Wednesday.
Wildlife Trusts	Hampshire Wildlife Trust	I support this site on basis of estuarine rocky habitat.
Marine ecology	Seasearch	Strongly support as RA for estuarine rocky habitat - a remnant of London clay ashfall band which is recognised to support rich algal community (imp. Plant area). Option A is a better RA for Sabellaria.
Marine Wildlife	Marine Conservation Society	<u>Support</u> reference area.
Statutory environmental	Environment Agency	Harwich Haven. Support ecologically.
IFCA	Kent & Essex IFCA	Harwich Haven - general support.
Heritage and Archaeology	English Heritage	Harwich Haven [no further comment]

15. Evolution of the site recommendations

The Local Group tried to revise the boundaries to minimise impacts on users of the area but there was no clear better option. The RSG agreed to put it forward in the Final Recommendations as the site is ecologically important but stressed that further survey work is needed.

For greater detail on discussions relating to the site and the network, please refer to both RSG and Local Group stakeholder meeting reports at www.balancedseas.org.

16. Implications for Stakeholders

The following issues are associated with this site:

- Recreational shore angling - anglers would want the landward boundary to lie 150m offshore, but the cement stone is in the intertidal
- A recommended route for recreational yachts entering the estuaries cuts through the north east corner of the site, although this should not be affected by the rRA
- Includes a recreational anchorage but this is little used as it is too exposed and not very attractive; vessels may use it for an hour or two when entering the river; HHA licences about 6 moorings above the stone pier (this may not overlap with the *Sabellaria* data point).
- Maintenance dredging takes place in the north west corner of the site

This list represents only the major issues associated with the site. To see all stakeholder discussions, please refer to the Balanced Seas RSG and Local Group meeting reports at www.balancedseas.org.