

## Marine Conservation Zone: Selection Assessment Document

<b>Version and Issue date</b>	<b>Amendments made</b>
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.

<b>1. Site name</b> Yarmouth to Cowes rMCZ no 23 Contains:- Newtown Harbour draft Reference Area no 19	<b>3. Site surface area</b> 1675 ha      16.75 km <sup>2</sup>
<b>2. Site centre location</b> ETRS89 N50 43' 53.518" W1 24' 35.659" N50 43.892' W1 24.594' (N.B. WGS 84 UTM 31N coordinates are provided in the map vertices)	<b>4. Biogeographic region</b> Eastern English Channel

### 5. Features proposed for designation within Yarmouth to Cowes <sup>1</sup>

Feature type	Feature name	Area / No. of records <sup>2</sup>
Broad-scale habitats	A2.1 intertidal coarse sediment	0.03km <sup>2</sup>
	A1.3 low energy intertidal rock	0.01 km <sup>2</sup>
	A3.2 mod energy infralittoral rock	0.21 km <sup>2</sup>
	A5.1 subtidal coarse sediment	11.99 km <sup>2</sup>
Habitat FOCI	Estuarine rocky habitats	81.80 m <sup>2</sup>
	Intertidal underboulder communities	2 records
	Native oyster beds†	21 records
	Peat and clay exposures	8 records
	Rossworm ( <i>Sabellaria spinulosa</i> ) reef	313.38 m <sup>2</sup>
Species FOCI Low mobility	Seagrass beds	1 record
	Lagoon Sand Shrimp ( <i>Gammarus insensibilis</i> )	2 records
	Native Oyster ( <i>Ostrea edulis</i> )†	25 records

†This feature is to be protected within Newtown Harbour only and not throughout the site.

### 6. Features within Yarmouth to Cowes not proposed for designation <sup>3</sup>

Feature type	Feature name	Comments
Broad-scale habitats	A2.1 intertidal coarse sediment	Majority of habitat protected by Solent Maritime SAC
	A2.2 Intertidal sand and muddy sand	Fully protected by Solent Maritime SAC, Solent and Southampton Water SPA and Thorness Bay SSSI
	A2.3 intertidal mud	Fully protected by Solent Maritime SAC, Solent and Southampton Water SPA, Thorness Bay SSSI and Newtown Harbour SSSI
	A2.4 intertidal mixed sediments	Majority of habitat protected by Solent Maritime SAC
	A2.5 coastal saltmarshes/saline reedbeds	Fully protected by Solent Maritime SAC and all SSSIs and Solent to Southampton Water SPA
	A5.2 subtidal sand	Fully protected by Solent Maritime SAC
	A5.3 subtidal mud	
	A5.4 subtidal mixed sediments	Partially protected by Solent Maritime SAC as some habitat occurring outside SAC in MCZ
	Mosaic of A2.3, A2.5	Fully protected by Solent Maritime SAC
Habitat FOCI	Littoral chalk communities	No chalk in the area (Local Group)
	Seagrass beds	Extent of known seagrass fully protected within Solent Maritime SAC and Newtown Harbour SSSI
	Subtidal chalk	Not thought to occur here (Solent Local Group)

<sup>1</sup> Sources of information relating to these features are listed in Section 13.

<sup>2</sup> Areas have been calculated according to spatial GIS data and are indicative only. A "record" is a survey point where a single individual, population or habitat has been found.

<sup>3</sup> Features may appear in both tables (5 & 6) if they are already protected in an MPA that partially overlaps the MCZ.

## Yarmouth to Cowes rMCZ no 23

Feature type	Feature name	Comments
Species FOCI Low mobility	Starlet Sea Anemone ( <i>Nematostella vectensis</i> )	Fully protected within the Yar Estuary SSSI
	European Eel ( <i>Anguilla anguilla</i> )	Present throughout but not suitable for protection
	Smelt ( <i>Osmerus eperlanus</i> )	Present throughout but not suitable for protection
	Undulate Ray ( <i>Raja undulata</i> )	Present throughout but not suitable for protection

### 7. Map of site (see below)

### 8. Site summary

This site runs along the northwest coast of the Isle of Wight, stretching from Sconce Point on the west of Yarmouth to the West Cowes headlands and includes Newtown Harbour but not the Western Yar Estuary. The site contains several restricted habitats, such as peat and clay exposures, intertidal underboulder communities and estuarine rocky habitats. Some very good examples of seagrass occur here, though they are not considered to be in such good condition as the Norris to Ryde beds (also proposed as an rMCZ). Highly species rich examples of Rossworm (*Sabellaria spinulosa*) reefs occur at the mouth of Newtown Harbour. The Native Oyster (*Ostrea edulis*) is heavily harvested throughout the site except in Newtown Harbour, where stakeholders have recommended the species (and its beds) becomes a feature for protection. Also within Newtown Harbour, records show a population of Lagoon Sand Shrimp (*Gammarus insensibilis*) in the Salt Pans, as well as peat and clay exposures and some of the best examples of estuarine rocky habitats in the region. For this reason, Newtown Harbour has been recommended as a Reference Area (see rRA 19 Newtown Harbour). To the west of Newtown Harbour entrance, Bouldnor Cliff exhibits ancient peats and clays as well as fossilised tree remnants.

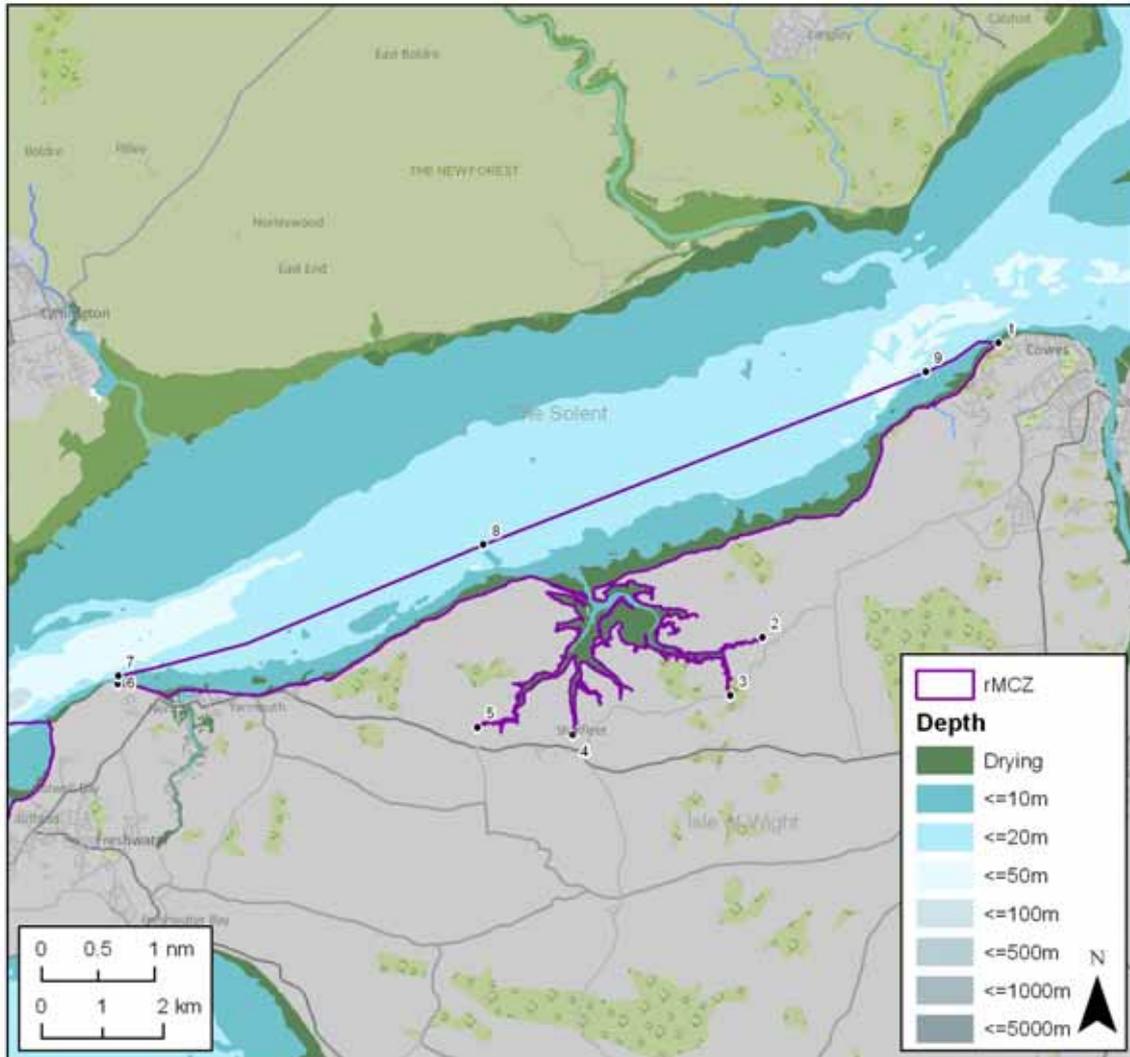
This site covers part of the Solent, a naturally restricted body of water confined between the mainland and the Isle of Wight. This geographical location has meant that the seabed ecosystems are also naturally bounded by the landforms. In addition, the intense level of shipping traffic occurring in the Solent has meant that the channels are regularly and heavily dredged to maintain clear passage. For these ecological and socio-economic reasons, stakeholders have not extended the site to have a minimum dimension of 5km.

The draft conservation objectives have implications for benthic trawling, shellfish harvesting, potting and recreational anchoring in parts of the site, in order to protect some of the more sensitive habitats in the site, such as seagrass beds, peat and clay exposures and Rossworm (*Sabellaria spinulosa*) reef. However, these must be discussed with the relevant stakeholders and sectors as there are extreme concerns about future impacts of this site on Isle of Wight livelihoods. Other activities are considered to be acceptable according to the available information.

# Yarmouth to Cowes rMCZ no 23

## Yarmouth to Cowes rMCZ no 23 Site Map

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Date: Aug 2011



### Boundary coordinates

ID	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Decimal Minutes	
	Latitude	Longitude	Latitude	Longitude
1	N50° 45' 56.546"	W1° 19' 9.811"	N50° 45.942'	W1° 19.164'
2	N50° 43' 11.164"	W1° 22' 12.871"	N50° 43.196'	W1° 22.215'
3	N50° 42' 38.865"	W1° 22' 36.896"	N50° 42.648'	W1° 22.615'
4	N50° 42' 12.841"	W1° 24' 47.037"	N50° 42.214'	W1° 24.784'
5	N50° 42' 13.881"	W1° 26' 6.617"	N50° 42.231'	W1° 26.110'
6	N50° 42' 25.468"	W1° 31' 10.213"	N50° 42.424'	W1° 31.170'
7	N50° 42' 29.765"	W1° 31' 10.288"	N50° 42.496'	W1° 31.171'
8	N50° 43' 51.864"	W1° 26' 11.010"	N50° 43.864'	W1° 26.183'
9	N50° 45' 38.626"	W1° 20' 9.352"	N50° 45.644'	W1° 20.156'



Map and coordinates displayed in WGS84, UTM Zone 31 North.

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### 9. Detailed site description



The following is a description of the site based on extracts from literature held by the Balanced Seas Project and stakeholder correspondence. It does not constitute a complete literature review or ecological description of the site.

This site is adjacent to the northwest coast of the Isle of Wight, running between the Sconce Point and West Cowes headlands and including Newtown Harbour, considered to be an undeveloped and pristine estuary system for its terrestrial and intertidal habitats (Solent Local Group meeting 3, Nov 2010). According to the UKSeaMap/MESH map (v7 JNCC), the majority of the seabed within the site is shown to be subtidal coarse sediment (A5.1), which is part of a larger stretch of mixed subtidal gravel and sand habitat that can be found along the north coast of the Isle of Wight between Yarmouth and Gurnard Ledge (Jones *et al.* 2004) (see Broad-scale habitats map.)

Peat and clay exposures are found at the eastern and western (just off the headland at the eastern boundary) extremes of the site (see FOCI map.) The westernmost point was surveyed by the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Trust (see Figure 1), who suggest that the feature is far more extensive than mapped, with large clay exposures also occurring at Bouldnor, to the east of Yarmouth. A video-tow survey is being carried out and the resulting data will be analysed for the presence of peat and clay exposures, records for which will be transferred to Natural England for more accurate mapping of this feature (HloWWT email, 24.08.2011).

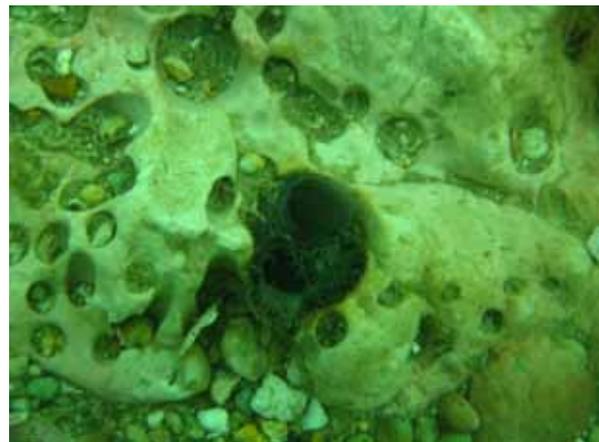


Figure 1. Piddock-bored clay exposures outside of Yarmouth Harbour

The westernmost record of peat and clay was originally mapped incorrectly within the Western Yar Estuary, leading the RSG to include the estuary in the site. However, after the Yar Estuary Harbour Master expressed concern regarding the impact of an MCZ, the data record was investigated, correctly located in its current position to the west of the estuary, and the estuary was removed from the site. However, in her database of nearshore and offshore peat deposits, Hazell (2008) documents that there are notable peat deposits in the Western Yar and Yar River, records for which are not held by the project.

Good examples of seagrass occur in the far west of the site (see FOCI map), noted as being the second best seagrass beds in the Solent though they are not considered to be in such good condition as the Norris to Ryde beds (Solent Local Group Mtg 3, Nov 2010). Biotope data from various sediment surveys have been collated by the Environment Agency, and these show that highly species rich examples of Rossworm (*Sabellaria spinulosa*) reefs occur at the mouth of Newtown Harbour.

The Native Oyster (*Ostrea edulis*) and oyster beds occur throughout the site and considerable levels of shellfish harvesting occur, with up to 12 licensed local vessels operating in the area (Solent Local Group 4, April 2011). Newtown Harbour contains native oysters in densities worthy of protection and the National Trust moorings prevent shellfish harvesting (Solent Local Group 4, April 2011). The RSG has therefore recommended that Native Oysters are made features for protection within Newtown Harbour only.

Newtown Harbour also has records of peat and clay exposures, and the Lagoon Sand Shrimp (*Gammarus insensibilis*) which occurs in the Salt Pans rather than the Harbour itself (Solent Local Group Meeting, April 2011). National contract data (Seely et al 2010 DEFRA MB102 2C) show estuarine rocky habitats within the Harbour; members of the Solent Local Group (LG meeting 3, Nov 2010) suggested that there are other datasets held by the BGS that indicate this habitat FOCI is more extensive throughout the rMCZ. The Western Solent has been described as the best area in the country to protect estuarine rocky habitats (Solent Local Group Mtg 3, Nov 2010) and the Local Wildlife Trust representative addressed previous concerns that estuarine rocky habitats were simply part of the crumbling sea wall by confirming that native hard limestone that constitutes this type of stone outcropping habitat definitely occurs in Newtown Harbour (Solent Local Group 4, April 2011). Due to the number of features found in Newtown Harbour and the extensive levels of protection already in place from existing designations and National Trust ownership, the harbour has been recommended as a Reference Area (see rRA 19 Newtown Harbour). Were this recommendation to go ahead, the conservation objectives for features occurring in the RA would be changed accordingly.

The Wildlife Trusts have identified various species and habitats considered to be rare and important in the southeast region and have provided spatial data to the project. Their data show that hard rock reefs and Peacock Worm (*Sabella pavonina*) occur here (see Southeast Features map). The rMCZ includes two of the Key Inshore Biodiversity Areas in the Balanced Seas Region recommended as an MCZ by the South East England Biodiversity Forum (SEEBF, 2010). Recent surveys by the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trusts in Thorness Bay have found evidence of intertidal underboulder communities with many boulders hosting a variety of sponges, seasquirts and crustaceans typical of these habitats. Significant clay exposures with numerous piddocks were also noted. These survey data are very recent and have not yet been passed to Balanced Seas

To the west of the Creek entrance, Bouldnor Cliff exhibits a 4m high underwater cliff containing peat layers and a submerged forest of tree boles and root systems, considered to be the only known submerged prehistoric primary site in British waters (Hazel 2008, Momber 2000, Tomalin 2000). Local stakeholders have noted the importance of Bouldnor Cliff as an area that is protected from anchoring activity (Solent Local Group Mtg 4, April 2011) and have provided information to identify the location of the underwater cliffs (see Figure 2).

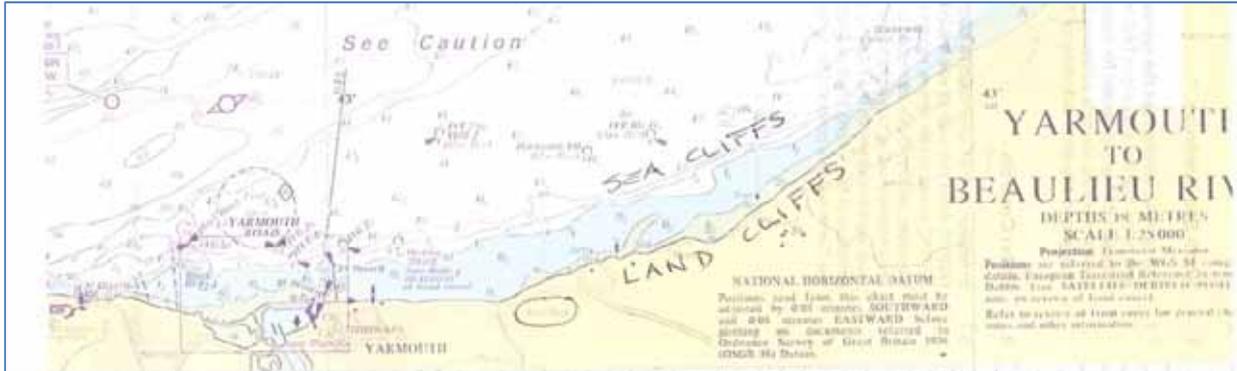


Figure 2. Bouldnor Sea and Land Cliffs (reproduction of Admiralty Chart courtesy of RSA Isle of Wight)

The RSPB have identified that the site is an important foraging area for Common Tern, Great Cormorant, Little Tern, Mediterranean Gull and Sandwich Tern. Sconce Point to Bouldnor Cliff, and Thorness Bay (to the east of Newtown Harbour), both areas lying within this rMCZ are Key Inshore Biodiversity Areas in the Balanced Seas Region recommended as MCZs by the South East England Biodiversity Forum (SEEBF, 2011)

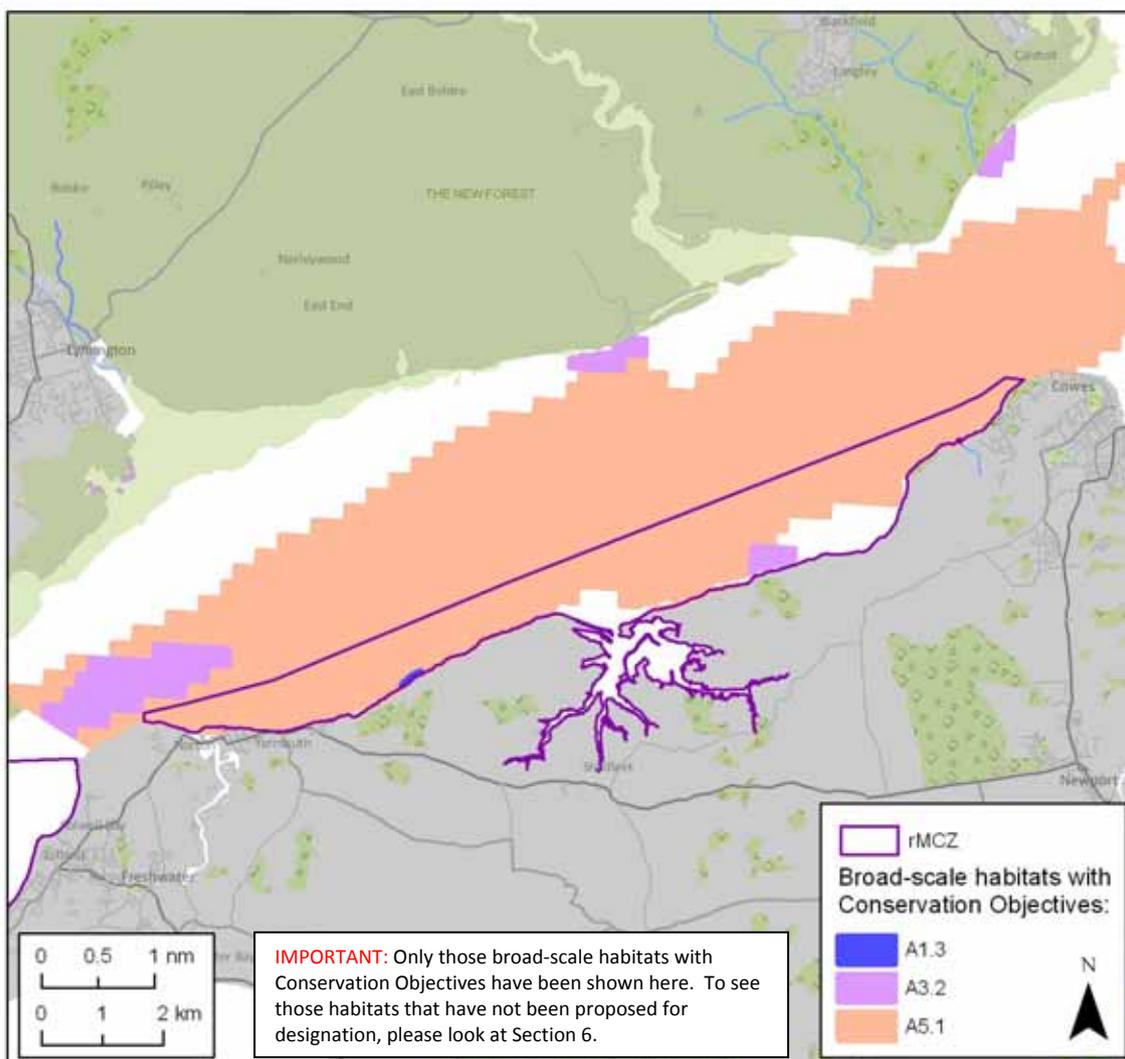
This site covers part of the Solent, a naturally restricted body of water confined between the mainland and the Isle of Wight. This geographical location has meant that the seabed ecosystems are also naturally bounded by the landforms. In addition, the intense level of shipping traffic occurring in the Solent has meant that the channels are regularly and heavily dredged to maintain clear passage. For these ecological and socio-economic reasons, stakeholders have not extended the site to have a minimum dimension of 5km.

Littoral chalk communities were originally thought to occur here from the presence of a single record (Seely et al, 2010 DEFRA MB102 2C) but the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trusts suggested that the chalk does not actually outcrop at the site as it runs underground with only a very small amount of exposure (Solent Local Group Mtg 3, Nov 2010).

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Broad-scale habitats (EUNIS Level 3) with Conservation Objectives



Broad-scale habitats with Conservation Objectives:

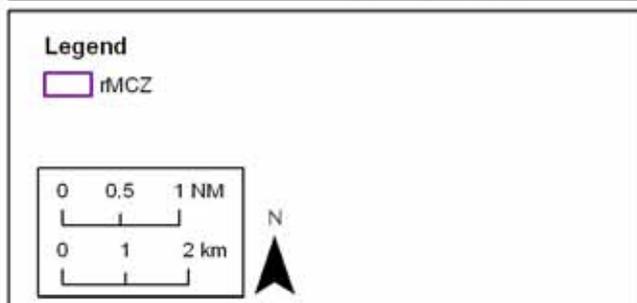
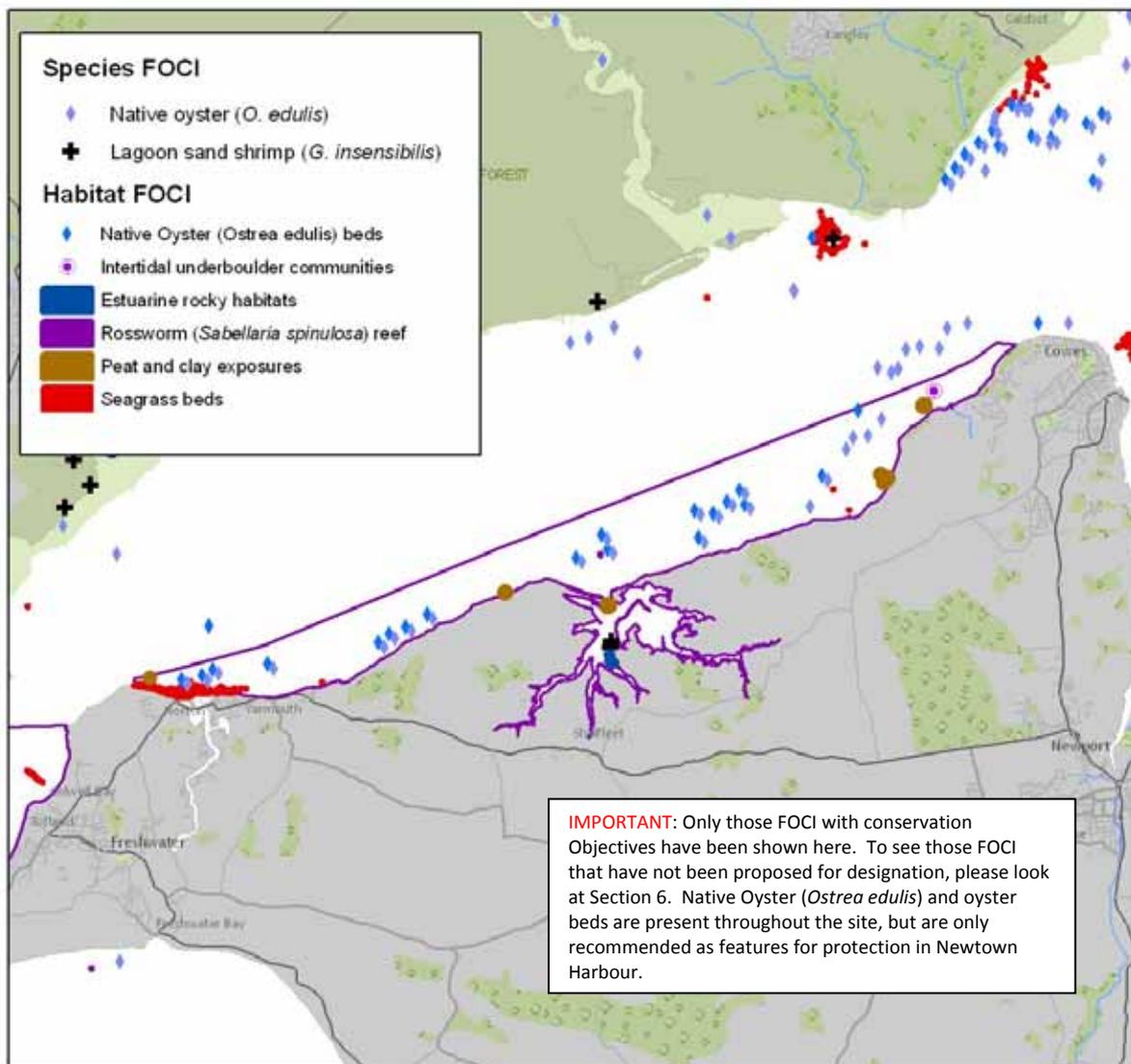
- A1.3 low energy intertidal rock
- A3.2 mod energy infralittoral rock
- A5.1 subtidal coarse sediment



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Yarmouth to Cowes rMCZ no 23  
Habitat and Species FOCI

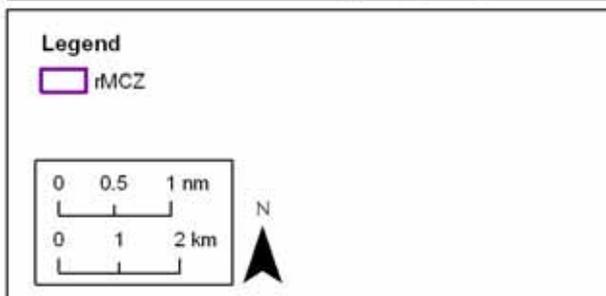
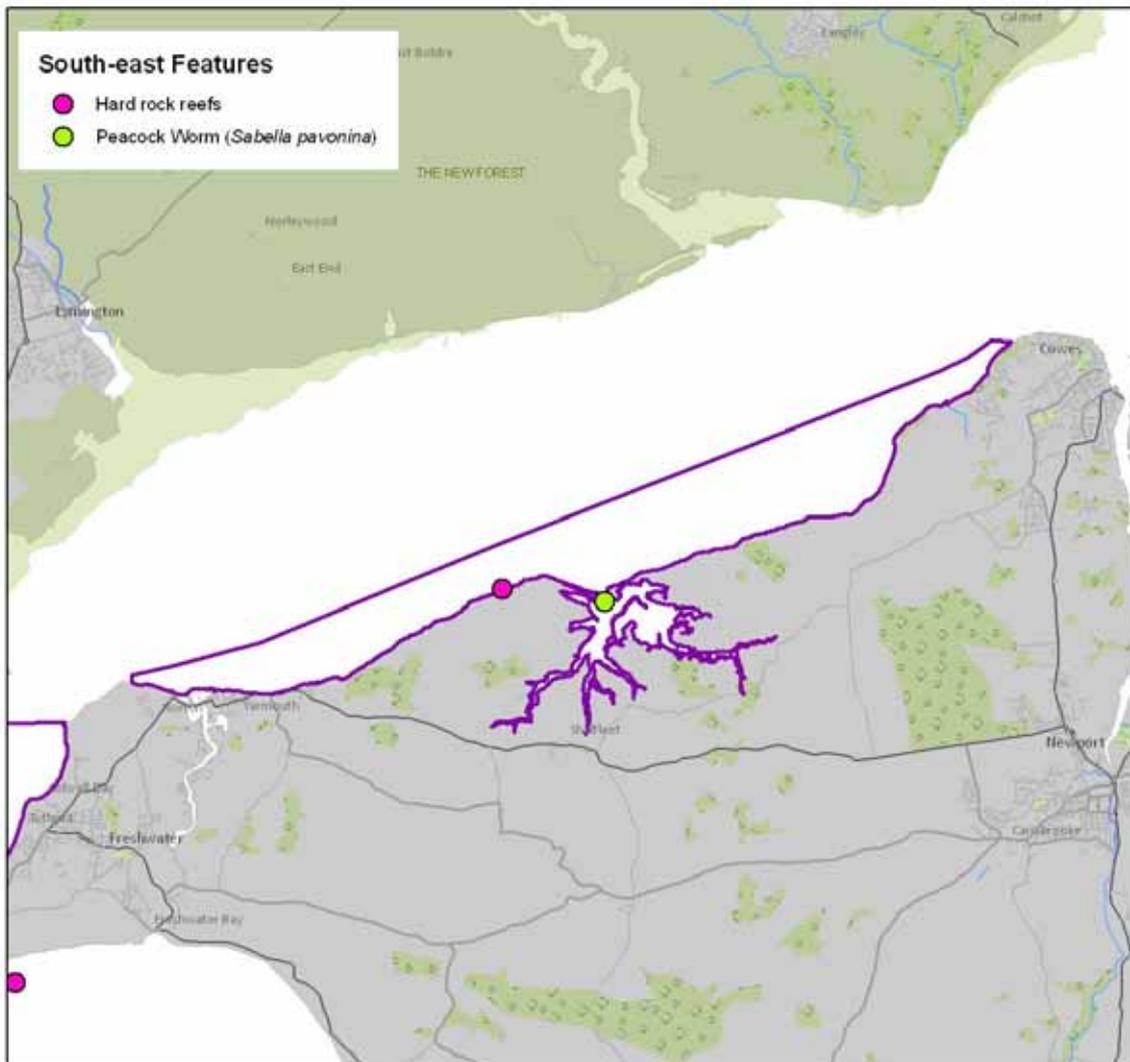
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# Yarmouth to Cowes rMCZ no 23 South-east Features

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**10. Site boundary**

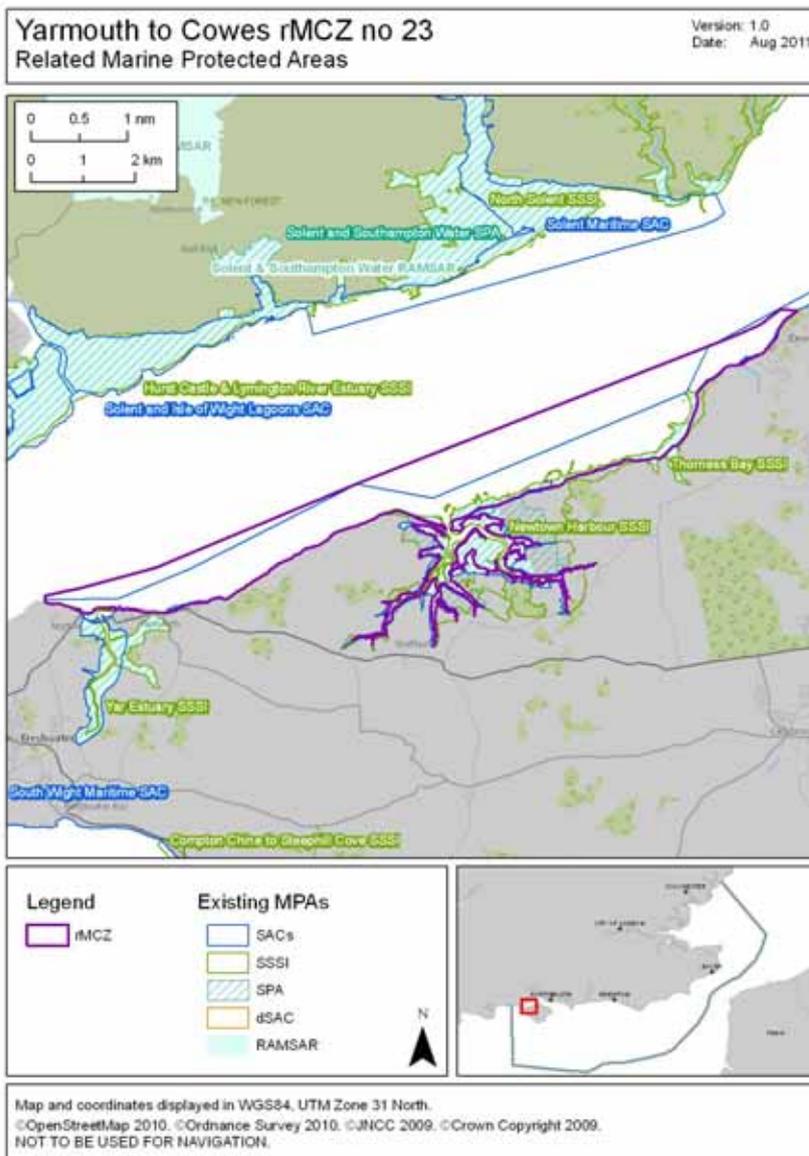
The landward boundary of this site is determined by the Mean High Water mark, including Newtown Harbour and its important features. The site previously included the Yar Estuary, but the boundaries were revised to exclude this area when it was discovered that ENG features were located outside the estuary mouth; the landward boundary in the vicinity of Yarmouth follows the seaward side of the harbour walls. The seaward boundary has been set to follow the navigational buoys that run between the two headlands of the site.

**11. Conservation objectives**

Individual conservation objective forms for each feature can be found in Appendix 1. For a site-based summary of the conservation objectives and proposed management measures, please see Section 15.

**12. Sites to which this site is related**

This site overlaps with the Solent Maritime SAC, Newtown Harbour SSSI, Thorness Bay SSSI and is adjacent to the Yar Estuary SSSI.



## Yarmouth to Cowes rMCZ no 23

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

Information	Type of information	Source	Name of survey	Date
Broad-scale habitats	Modelled and survey data	JNCC V.7 Combined UKSeaMap and MESH	Combined	June 2011
Estuarine rocky habitats	Survey	National contract data, DEFRA MB102 2C		20/09/2005
intertidal under boulder communities	Survey	National contract data, DEFRA MB102 2C	JNCCMNCR10000245	10/06/1986
Native oyster beds	Survey	National contract data, DEFRA MB102 2C		01/01/2009
Native oyster beds	Survey	marine recorder extract Sept 2010 (via Kent Wildlife Trust)	various	26/04/1987
Native oyster beds	Survey	Hampshire and loW Wildlife Trust		01/09/2006
Peat and clay exposures	Survey	National contract data, DEFRA MB102 2C	JNCCMNCR10000250 JNCCMNCR10000245	26/04/1987 and 11/06/1986
Peat and clay exposures	Survey	Hampshire and loW Wildlife Trust	SeaSearch (Yarmouth)	12/08/2010
Peat and clay exposures	Survey	Kent Wildlife Trust		08/06/1986
Rossworm ( <i>Sabellaria spinulosa</i> ) reef	Survey	Data sourced from: Environment Agency database		16/05/2007
Seagrass beds	Survey	Hampshire and loW Wildlife Trust		2006-2008
Littoral chalk communities	Survey	National contract data, DEFRA MB102 2C	JNCCMNCR10000245	08/06/1986
Subtidal chalks	Survey	National contract data, DEFRA MB102 2C	JNCCMNCR10000250	26/04/1987
Sheltered muddy gravels	Survey	Hampshire and loW Wildlife Trust		01/09/2006
Subtidal sands and gravels	Survey	Hampshire and loW Wildlife Trust		01/09/2006
Lagoon Sand Shrimp ( <i>Gammarus insensibilis</i> )	Survey	National contract data, DEFRA MB102 2B		01/01/1987
Native oyster ( <i>O.edulis</i> )	Survey	National contract data, DEFRA MB102 2B	JNCCMNCR10000250 JNCCMNCR10000245	26/04/1987 and 08/06/1986

### References (additional information can be found in the Bibliography)

- HAZELL, A. 2008. Offshore and intertidal peat deposits, England — a resource assessment and development of a database *Environmental Archaeology*, Volume 13, Number 2, October, pp. 101-110
- JONES, L.A., IRVING, R., COSGROVE A.R.P., COYLE M.D., GILLILAND, P.M. & MURRAY, A.R. 2004. Eastern Channel Marine Natural Area Profile: A contribution to regional planning and management of theseas around England. Peterborough: English Nature
- MOMBER, G. 2000 'Drowned and deserted; a submerged prehistoric landscape in the Solent, England', *The International Journal of Nautical Archaeology*, 29(1), 86-99.
- SEEBF (South East England Biodiversity Forum (SEEBF) 2011. Key Inshore Biodiversity Areas in the Balanced Seas Region for recommendation as Marine Conservation Zones. Letter and list to RSG and Balanced Seas Project Team, 22 Nov 2011.
- SEELEY, B., LEAR, D. HIGGS, S. NEILLY, M. BILEWITCH, J. EVANS, J. WILKES, P. & ADAMS, L. 2010. *Assessing and Developing the Required Biophysical Dataset and Data Layers for Marine Protected Areas Network Planning and Wider Marine Spatial Planning Purposes: Mapping of species with limited mobility (Benthic species). (Task 2B)*. DEFRA, London.
- SEELEY, B., HIGGS, S., LEAR, D., EVANS, J., NEILLY, M., CAMPBELL, M., WILKES, P., ADAMS, L., 2010. *Assessing and Developing the Required Biophysical Dataset and Data Layers for Marine Protected Areas Network Planning and Wider Marine Spatial Planning Purposes. Report No 16: Mapping of Protected Habitats (MB102 Task 2C)*. DEFRA, London.

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SOUTH EAST ENGLAND BIODIVERSITY FORUM (SEEBF) 2010. *Key Inshore Biodiversity Areas in the Balanced Seas Region for Recommendation as Marine Conservation Zones*. Letter and list to RSG and Balanced Seas Project Team, 22 Nov 2010.

TOMALIN, D. 2000b 'Wisdom of hindsight; paleoenvironmental and archaeological evidence of long-term processual changes and coastline sustainability'. *Proceedings in Marine Science*, 12, 71-83

### 14. Stakeholder support for the site

The RSG as a group reached consensus that this site should be put forward in their final recommendations and most sectors supported the site.

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 Yarmouth to Cowes rMCZ 23
Yachting	RYA	Moderate support for MAINTAIN objective. Need to recognise pressures around Yarmouth Harbour entrance. Need to be clear what voluntary code for RECOVER would mean before can support.
Kite Surfing	British Kite Surfing Association	Supported no objections to pulling boundary out for harbour and ferry port. Should be RECOVER unless survey shows no overlap.
Sea Angling		Recommend MAINTAIN for all features. Very important for RSA local agreements preferred.
Fishing - FPO, beam trawling		No support from local industry if CO is "RECOVER" on peat and clay. Limited support if "MAINTAIN".
Birds	RSPB	Support site as it will benefit foraging seabirds.
Wildlife Trusts	Hampshire Wildlife Trust	I support this site but not the downgrading of the COs by the IFCA based on unsubstantiated activity data, they should be retained as RECOVER.
Marine Ecology	Seasearch	Strong support for this site for the several features present, including oysters in the creeks. COs need to be carefully assessed to verify where features and activities overlap.
Marine Wildlife	Marine Conservation Society	<u>Support site</u> . RECOVER all broadscale habitats to bottom towed fishing.
Heritage and Archaeology	English Heritage	Support if access to Bouldnor Cliff for archaeological research continues. Also possible sampling of peat and clay exposures.

### 15. Site summary of conservation objectives (COs) and proposed management measures

A conservation objective (CO) is a statement describing the desired quality of the feature. Existing MPAs in the UK use the term *Favourable Condition* to represent the desired state of their features. Some pressures caused by human activities may stop the feature attaining favourable condition if present at sufficient intensity.

MAINTAIN means that, the *stated levels of activity* currently occurring on the feature are considered acceptable, but features will be monitored and restrictions may have to be introduced if the condition declines.

RECOVER means that restrictions may be necessary on the activity causing the pressure, in order to allow the feature to recover to favourable condition. It does not necessarily mean that the activity will be prohibited, as other mitigation measures might be appropriate (e.g. change in gear type, reduction of intensity, seasonal restrictions, etc)

The table below documents the draft COs for ALL the features listed for protection within the site, as established by JNCC and NE through the Vulnerability Assessment (VA) process<sup>4</sup> and then sense-checked at the national level<sup>5</sup>. Where a RECOVER objective is noted, the associated activity causing the pressure is indicated. In some cases, where data and information warrant it, the RSG chose to adopt the changes to COs recommended by the public authorities: Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities (IFCAs), Marine Management Organisation (MMO), Environment Agency (EA) or Natural England. Changes were only accepted when recommended by these authorities and have been clearly noted. Where the VA has not yet been undertaken, or there is considerable uncertainty surrounding the accuracy of the information being used to recommend a change to the conservation objective, it has been noted as 'TO BE ASSESSED'. Local and regional stakeholders were given the opportunity to comment on the COs and potential management measures and to provide additional information that might not have been taken into account in the VA work. 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](http://www.balancedseas.org).

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<sup>4</sup> The process of establishing conservation objectives is outlined in the [Conservation Objectives Guidance](#) (JNCC /NE 2011)

<sup>5</sup> VA results were standardised across all four regional projects but the fisheries activity data is still undergoing assessment.

## Yarmouth to Cowes rMCZ no 23

Feature	Draft CO	Activity exerting pressure	IFCA/MMO/EA/NE Comments	Stakeholder comments on draft COs and potential management measures
A1.3 Low energy intertidal rock	MAINTAIN			
A2.1 Intertidal coarse sediment	To be assessed	This habitat was included as a feature for protection at the final RSG meeting in August 2011. As a consequence, a vulnerability assessment will need to be undertaken and CO determined.		
A2.3 Intertidal mud		This habitat was included as a feature for protection at the final RSG meeting in August 2011. However, it was later found to be fully protected by the Solent Maritime SAC, Solent and Southampton Water SPA, Thorness Bay SSSI and Newtown Harbour SSSI and will not need to be included.		
A3.2 Moderate energy infralittoral rock	RECOVER MAINTAIN (See IFCA comment)	Fishing - benthic trawling (bottom gear)	IFCA recommend change to MAINTAIN as activities do not overlap	LG agree (July 2011) with IFCA suggestion to change CO to MAINTAIN  LG clarified there is some towed oyster dredging but this is to the side of the rock.
	RECOVER MAINTAIN (See IFCA comment)	Fishing - shellfish harvesting (towed dredging)		
	RECOVER	Tourism & recreation (anchoring by recreational vessels)	MMO code of conduct	LG (July 2011) said small dinghies may anchor there with light anchors; one of the best spots for angling is - mitigation could be a cap on anchor weight. Further consultation needed.
A5.1 Subtidal coarse sediment	MAINTAIN			
Estuarine rocky habitats				Not discussed as this is within Newtown Harbour rRA and would have a CO of recover if this goes forward.
Intertidal underboulder communities	RECOVER	Tourism & recreation (anchoring by recreational vessels)	If required, MMO code of conduct	Intertidal habitat and so only covered by water and exposed to anchoring for part of day – LG suggested (July 2011) mitigation could be to limit the weight of an anchor e.g. small RSA boats with 5kg limit. RYA - lay racing buoys with small anchors also  RSG (August 2011) expressed uncertainty over limiting anchor weight as some stakeholders may try to avoid these measures by having a light anchor but a heavier chain which will do more damage to the feature. Wording of code of conduct will be critical to success of such a measure and must be negotiated locally due to the importance of the area for tourism.
Peat and clay exposures	RECOVER	Fishing - shellfish harvesting (towed dredging)	IFCA code of conduct if CO stays as RECOVER	LG suggested (July 2011) there is no overlap as shellfish dredging is mainly off the ledges where this feature occurs. Biggest section of this habitat is by Bouldnor Cliff which is dived intensively for archaeological interest and so shellfish dredgers keep away from it. WT think towed dredges might have an impact.  RSG agreed (Aug 2011) to reverse objective back to RECOVER due to uncertainty of the feature extent and therefore whether the activity overlaps. Fishing sector state that oysters don't occur on this type of habitat. RSG agreed that if there is no overlap, the situation will be self-

## Yarmouth to Cowes rMCZ no 23

Feature	Draft CO	Activity exerting pressure	IFCA/MMO/EA/NE Comments	Stakeholder comments on draft COs and potential management measures
				mitigating. However, better data is necessary on the distribution of the feature.
Rossworm ( <i>Sabellaria spinulosa</i> ) reef	RECOVER	Fishing - benthic trawling (bottom gear or trawls)	IFCA code of conduct	LG (July 2011) said that 5 trawlers use the area and there is some towed dredging but the data point appears to be where the channel marker is and therefore trawlers and dredgers would keep clear of it.
	RECOVER	Fishing - shellfish harvesting (towed dredging)		
	RECOVER	Tourism & recreation (anchoring by recreational vessels)		LG (July 2011) said that there is considerable anchoring outside Newtown Harbour which would increase if the latter is made a reference area. The extent of the feature needs to be verified – if it occurs to the east side of the channel then it won't be a problem for those wishing to anchor.
Seagrass beds	RECOVER	Fishing - benthic trawling (bottom gear)	Activities unlikely to overlap but if it is shown to then IFCA code of conduct should be sufficient	LG agree (July 2011) with IFCA comments and suggestions; Hampshire WT said recent survey of seagrass beds show they extend further to east of Bouldnor than project data shows
	RECOVER	Fishing - potting/creeling		
	RECOVER	Tourism & recreation (anchoring by recreational vessels and RSA fishing)	MMO code of conduct	The LG (July 2011) said there are anchor points buoyed off for safe swimming areas
Lagoon sand shrimp ( <i>Gammarus insensibilis</i> )	MAINTAIN (in MCZ only)			Note: if the rRA for Newtown Harbour goes forward, the CO for this feature would be Recover
Native Oyster ( <i>Ostrea edulis</i> )	MAINTAIN (in Newtown Harbour only)			This feature has been suggested for protection in Newtown Harbour not throughout the rMCZ, and would have a CO of Recover if the rRA goes forward.
Native oyster ( <i>Ostrea edulis</i> ) beds	MAINTAIN			
Bouldnor Cliff	MAINTAIN			The vulnerability assessment and associated conservation objective were only completed for the final RSG meeting in August and they were therefore not discussed by the Local Group in July

### 16. Evolution of the site recommendations

The site was first recommended as a broad area of interest in RSG 4 (Sept 2010) to capture those habitats not already protected under the existing MPAs in the Solent and included Newtown Harbour (then referred to as Newtown Creek) and the Western Yar Estuary. To increase support for the site, the seaward boundary of the site was changed to follow navigational buoys. Following concerns raised by Yarmouth (Isle of Wight) Harbour Commissioners and other stakeholders in the area about the inclusion of the harbour within the rMCZ, the Local Group and RSG reviewed the features for protection and discovered that the peat and clay exposure record occurring in the estuary had been inaccurately mapped. Correct mapping of the feature placed it outside the harbour mouth and the harbour was therefore removed from the MCZ as no other ENG features were thought to occur within it.

Newtown Harbour was considered to be a very good place for protection of features, given the existing protection and mitigation measures already in place. For this reason, parts of the harbour have been recommended as a Reference Area by local and regional stakeholders (Solent Local Group 4, Apr 2011).

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](http://www.balancedseas.org).

### 17. Implications for Stakeholders

Issues associated with this site are:

- The fact that the rMCZ is adjacent to Yarmouth Harbour has caused much concern to the ports, shipping (ferries) and recreational yachting sectors as they fear that it may ultimately have an impact on a range of economically important activities. The COs for the features to be protected do not give any indication that this would be the case, but these sectors have continued to lobby for the western edge of the boundary of the rMCZ to lie east of Yarmouth, and for reassurance about the long-term implications of any potential designation
- Important oyster fishery; local stakeholders recommended that the native oyster should be a protected feature only within Newtown Harbour where there is no commercial harvesting.
- Newtown Creek, owned by the National Trust, has a firing range and MOD landings at the Creek mouth, which must be taken into consideration, but otherwise this is already well managed and protected.
- The Crown Estate support the site, though note that it contains active power cables and licences for various activities.

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](http://www.balancedseas.org).