Selsey Bill and the Hounds rMCZ no 25.2

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	**3. Site surface area**
Selsey Bill and the Hounds rMCZ no 25.2 Contains Mixon Hole (Northern Slopes) rRA no 12	1290 ha 12.90 km^2
2. Site centre location	**4. Biogeographic region**
ETRS89 N50 42' 58.934" W0 47' 50.209" N50 42.982' W0 47.837' (**N.B.** WGS 84 UTM 31N coordinates are provided in the map vertices)	Eastern English Channel

5. Features proposed for designation within Selsey Bill and the Hounds[1]

Feature type	Feature name	EUNIS L3 translation from REC	Area [2]
Broad-scale habitats	A3.1 High energy infralittoral rock	n/a	2.33 km^2
REC Broad-scale habitat	A5.2 subtidal sand	A3.92 ME infralittoral rock and thin sands	4.98 km^2
		A3.A2 LE infralittoral rock and thin sandy sediment	
	A5.4 subtidal mixed sediments	A3.94 ME infralittoral rock and thin mixed sediments	4.79 km^2
		A3.A4 LE infralittoral rock and thin mixed sediments	
Habitat FOCI	Peat and clay exposures		7,394 m^2
Species FOCI	Short-snouted Seahorse (*Hippocampus hippocampus)*†		No records
Geology	Bracklesham Bay		n/a

† there are no data records for this species within the site, but the habitat is considered to be suitable and there is a record immediately outside the boundary (see FOCI map)

6. **Features within Selsey Bill and the Hounds not proposed for designation[3]**

Feature type	Feature name	Comments
	A2.4 intertidal mixed sediments	Very small area, targets met by existing MPAs
Habitat FOCI	Native oyster beds	Not a priority they do not occur in high enough densities (Site Mtg, Feb 2011)
	Subtidal sands and gravels	There are other areas in the region considered more suitable to protect this habitat (Site Mtg, Feb 2011)
Species FOCI Low mobility	Native Oyster (*Ostrea edulis*)	Population is scarce (Site Mtg, Feb 2011)
Species FOCI High mobility	European Eel (*Anguilla anguilla*)	Not a priority site for protection
	Undulate Ray (*Raja undulata*)	Found on the seaward boundary but site too close inshore for this species (Site Mtg, Feb 2011)

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

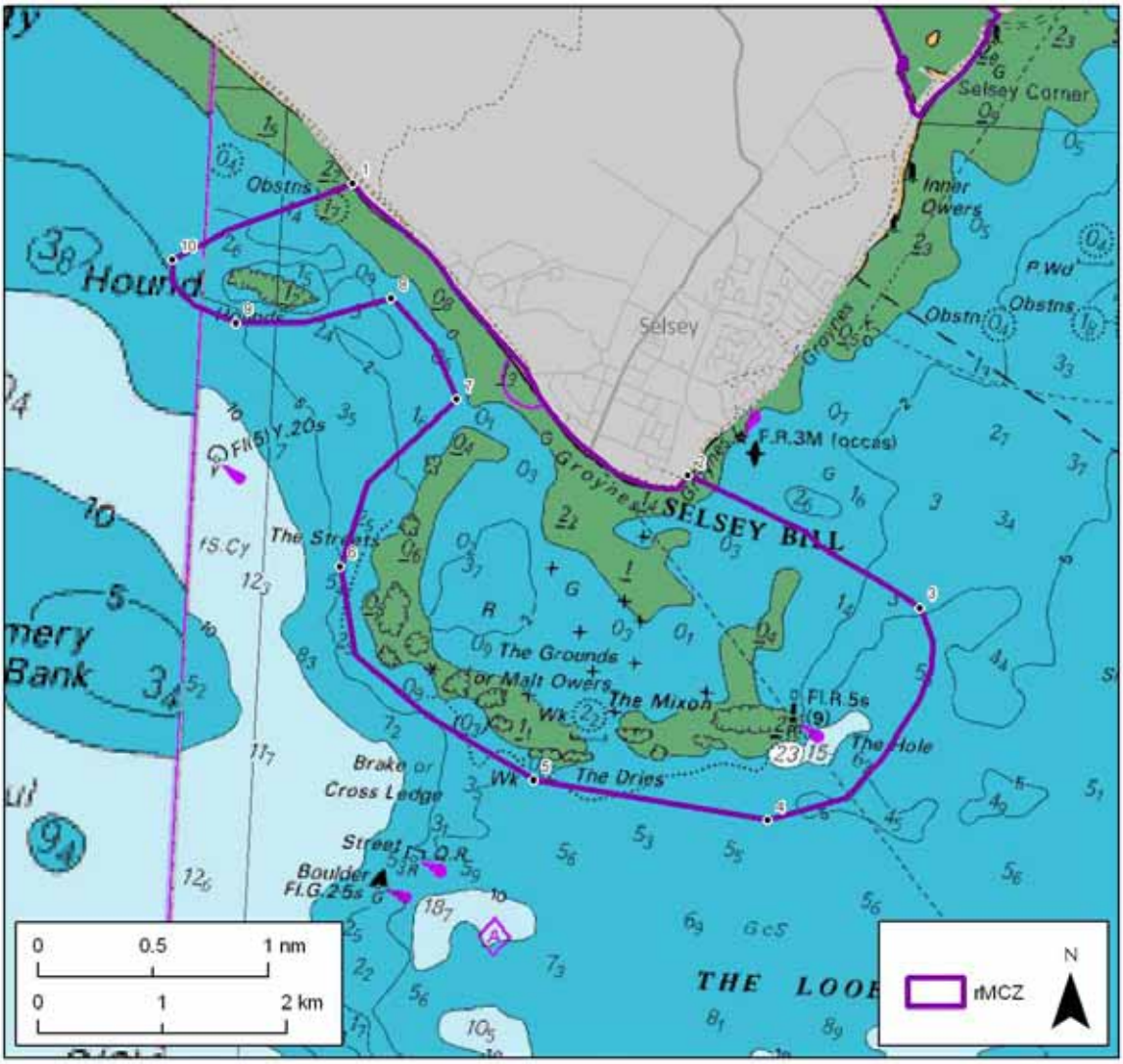
[2] Areas have been calculated according to spatial GIS data and are indicative only.

[3] A feature may appear in both tables (5&6) if the MCZ overlaps with an existing MPA where the feature is protected

7. Map of site

Selsey Bill and The Hounds rMCZ no 25.2
Site Map

Version: 1.0
Date: Aug 2011



ID	Degrees Minutes Seconds Latitude	Degrees Minutes Seconds Longitude	Degrees Decimal Minutes Latitude	Degrees Decimal Minutes Longitude
1	N50° 44' 36.551"	W0° 49' 31.081"	N50° 44.609'	W0° 49.518'
2	N50° 43' 24.666"	W0° 47' 6.981"	N50° 43.411'	W0° 47.116'
3	N50° 42' 53.121"	W0° 45' 29.012"	N50° 42.885'	W0° 45.484'
4	N50° 41' 55.400"	W0° 46' 26.801"	N50° 41.923'	W0° 46.447'
5	N50° 42' 2.854"	W0° 48' 4.116"	N50° 42.048'	W0° 48.069'
6	N50° 42' 56.254"	W0° 49' 28.212"	N50° 42.938'	W0° 49.470'
7	N50° 43' 41.453"	W0° 48' 43.731"	N50° 43.691'	W0° 48.729'
8	N50° 44' 7.120"	W0° 49' 12.988"	N50° 44.119'	W0° 49.216'
9	N50° 43' 58.411"	W0° 50' 16.204"	N50° 43.974'	W0° 50.270'
10	N50° 44' 14.124"	W0° 50' 43.679"	N50° 44.235'	W0° 50.728'

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

8. Site summary

The site captures the unusual outcropping rock features that run along MHW on the western side of Selsey Bill, and extends out seawards to include the Hounds in the north west and the rocky features off the headland itself. According to the UKSeaMap/MESH data (v7 JNCC), the seabed habitat is high energy infralittoral rock (A3.1), subtidal sand (A5.2) and mixed sediments (A5.4), but this does not correspond to stakeholder knowledge of the outcropping rock features. The REC data show the seabed to consist of moderate or low energy infralittoral rock covered with a thin veneer of sand, sandy sediment or mixed sediment, as well as thicker mixed sediments.

The key features here are the unusual outcrops of limestone and clay exposures (the Hounds, the Malt Owers, the Streets, the Grounds and the Mixon), some of which may be exposed at low tide. Along the northwestern coastline, a section of the geological feature, Bracklesham Bay, is incorporated into the site boundaries, where the Earnley Clay Formation exposes Eocene fossils along the beach. This site is well known for its high biodiversity created by the unusual seabed topography and indicated by the benthic biotope richness data. In the south east of the site is the Mixon Hole, a dramatic 20m drop in the seafloor exposing clay cliffs capped with limestone and supporting a rich diversity of habitats and species (designated as an mSNCI by East and West Sussex County Councils).

The RSG have recommended that the Vulnerability Assessment be reassessed using the REC data habitats and the forthcoming CCO data before COs are finalised for this site. Coastal defence would not be affected. Most activities are thought to be acceptable by the Sussex IFCA and local stakeholders, according to the available information.

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.

The site runs along MHW on the western side of Selsey Bill and extends out seawards to include the Hounds in the northwest and the rocky features off the headland itself. The site is designed to protect the variety of seabed habitats found within it, but the boundaries have been specifically drawn to capture the unusual geological and geomorphological rock features, including Mixon Hole and The Hounds, both of which are marine Sites of Nature Conservation Importance (mSNCIs) (Irving 1996).

According to the UKSeaMap/MESH data (v7 JNCC), the seabed habitat is high energy infralittoral rock, subtidal sand and mixed sediment (see Broad-scale habitats map), which does not correspond to stakeholder knowledge of the outcropping rock features. These EUNIS Level 3 habitat definitions are the result of 'back translating' reclassified finer-scale habitats from recent MALSF-funded seabed surveys (REC data: James *et al.* 2010, 2011) into the broader ENG habitat classifications, generally resulting in a coarser definition of the seabed[4]. The REC data show the seabed habitat to consist of moderate or low energy infralittoral rock covered with a thin veneer of sand, sandy sediment or mixed sediment, as well as thicker mixed sediments (James *et al.* 2011) (see REC EUNIS Level 4 map.)

Although the key features in the site are the unusual outcrops of limestone and clay called the Hounds, the Malt Owers, the Streets, the Grounds and the Mixon, the RSG felt it important to protect the integrity of the seabed across the site, and have therefore selected all of the broad-scale habitats for protection. However, the REC data does not extend up to MHW and therefore reveals a patch of A3.1 low energy infralittoral rock in between MHW and the survey extent where there is only UKSeaMap/MESH data. Since there is lower confidence in the presence of this habitat, it will be

[4] Please see the Final Recommendations report for a more detailed explanation of how these datasets have been used.

important to use the more recent survey data (REC data and forthcoming Channel Coastal Observatory data) when reviewing the vulnerability assessment and setting final conservation objectives.

Southeast of Selsey Bill itself (see Figure 1), the Mixon Hole is an almost vertical, 20m-high soft light grey clay cliff overlain by an exposure of stiff blue clay with a cap of limestone bedrock (see Figure 2), breaking the surface at low water spring tides (Irving 1996). Thought to be a segment of an ancient river gorge swept clear by tidal current, the Hole contains the Roman remains of worked stone in the form of large cuboidal blocks and spherical catapult balls (Irving 1996). The ledges, crevices and fissures of the exposed clay are covered by foliose red algae, bored by piddocks *Pholas dactylus* and inhabited by crustacean such as squat lobster (*Galathea squamifera),* Edible Crab (*Cancer pagurus),* Velvet Swimming Crab (*Necora puber)* and fish species, like Tompot Blennies (*Parablennius gattorugine)* and Leopard-spotted gobies (*Thorogobius ephippiatus*). Towards the base of the cliff, the slope is covered in cobbles and boulders supporting colonies of hydroids and sea squirts. At the cliff base is an area of tide-swept pebbles and shells with lumps of muddy clay, rich in crustacea and bivalves (Irving 1996). The Hole is also recognised as an Important Plant Area for its unusual algal communities (Brodie *et al.* 2007). Mixon Holes site was one of the recommendations put forward by the Marine Conservation Society as part of their 'Your Seas Your Voice' Campaign, where the general public could vote for the site they would most like to see gain more protection; of those who voted (134), 96% were in favour (MCS, 2011).

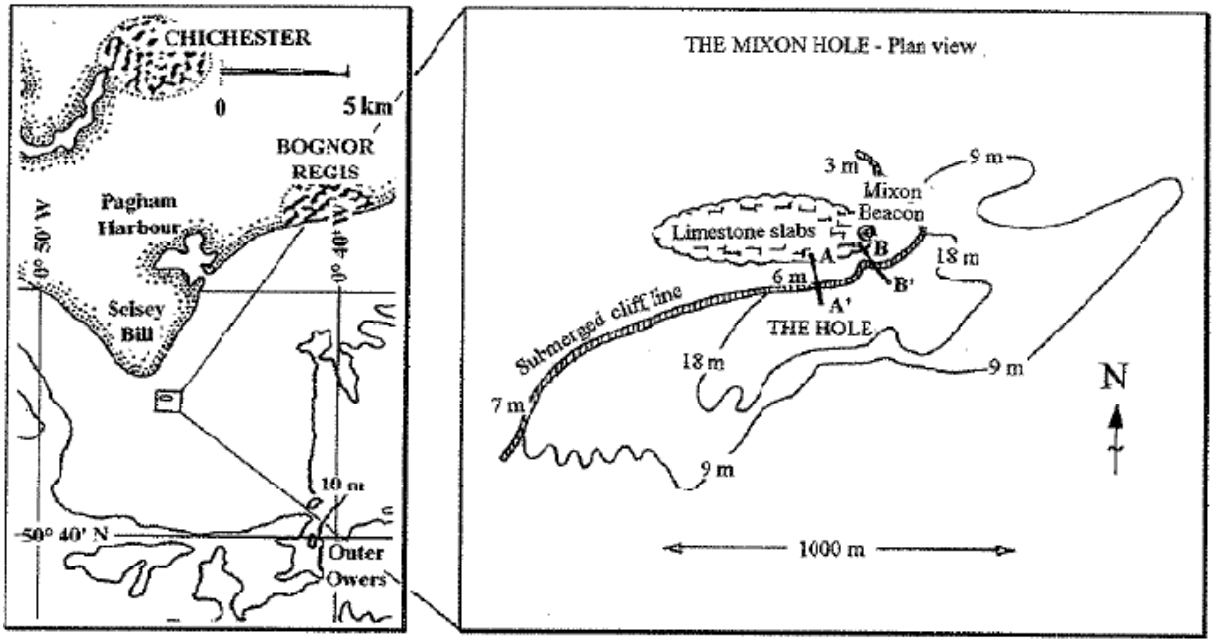


Figure 1. Location and plan of the Mixon Hole. Cross-sections of the cliff at A'-A and B'-B are shown in Figure 2 (from Irving, 1996)

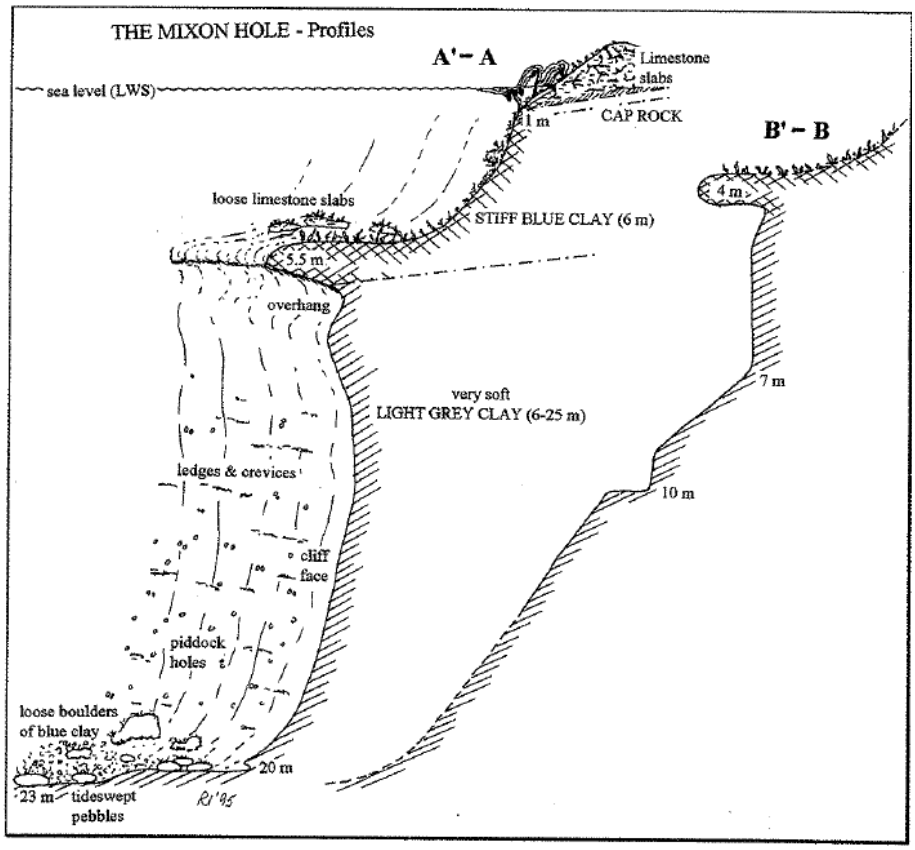


Figure 2. Vertical profile of the Mixon Hole, describing cross-sections A'-A and B'-B as shown in Figure 1 (from Irving, 1996)

The western boundary of the site has been drawn to specifically capture The Hounds, a reef lying to the west of Selsey Bill (see Figure 3) formed of limestone cap-rock both intact and as broken flat slabs, with an underlying softer clay layer eroded in places to form holes and caves (Irving 1996). The shallowest parts of the reef are exposed at low water spring tides. The bedrock outcrops are sparsely colonised by an assortment of algal species, such as kelp and red foliose algae, and sessile faunal species, such as anemones, sponges, hydroids and ascidians (Irving 1996, see Figure 4). The surrounding seabed (mixed sediments of pebbles, gravels, sand and shells) harbour bivalves, such as Slipper Limpet (*Crepidula fornicata*) and Native Oyster (*Ostrea edulis*). The reef is considered important as sublittoral rocky reefs account for less than 3% of the total Sussex seabed (within 12 nm)and exposed limestone strata are also rare, being mostly sandstone or chalk (Irving 1996).

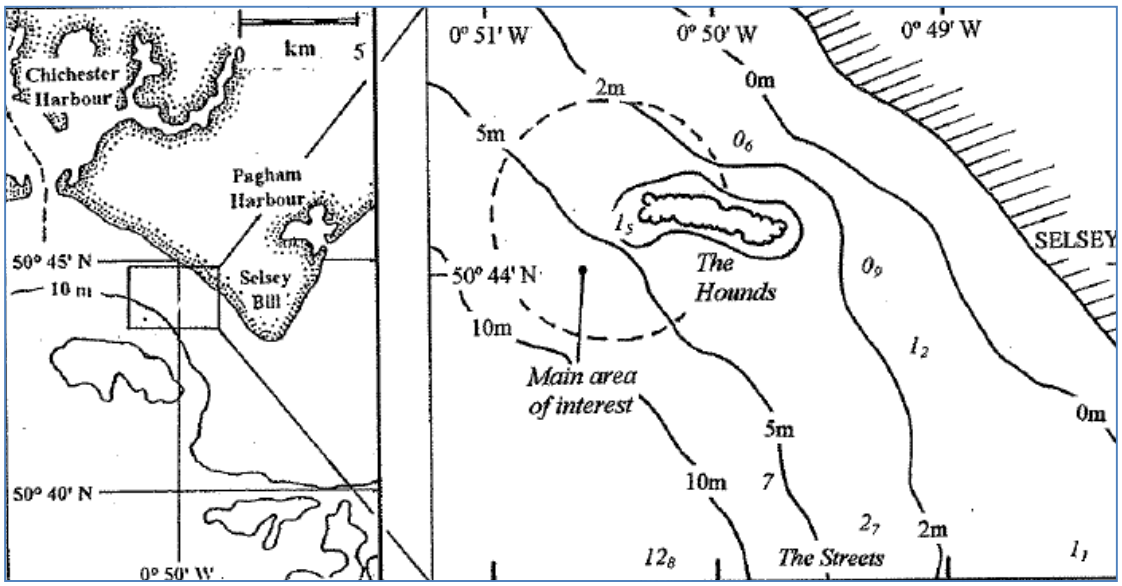


Figure 3. Location of The Hounds (from Irving, 1996)

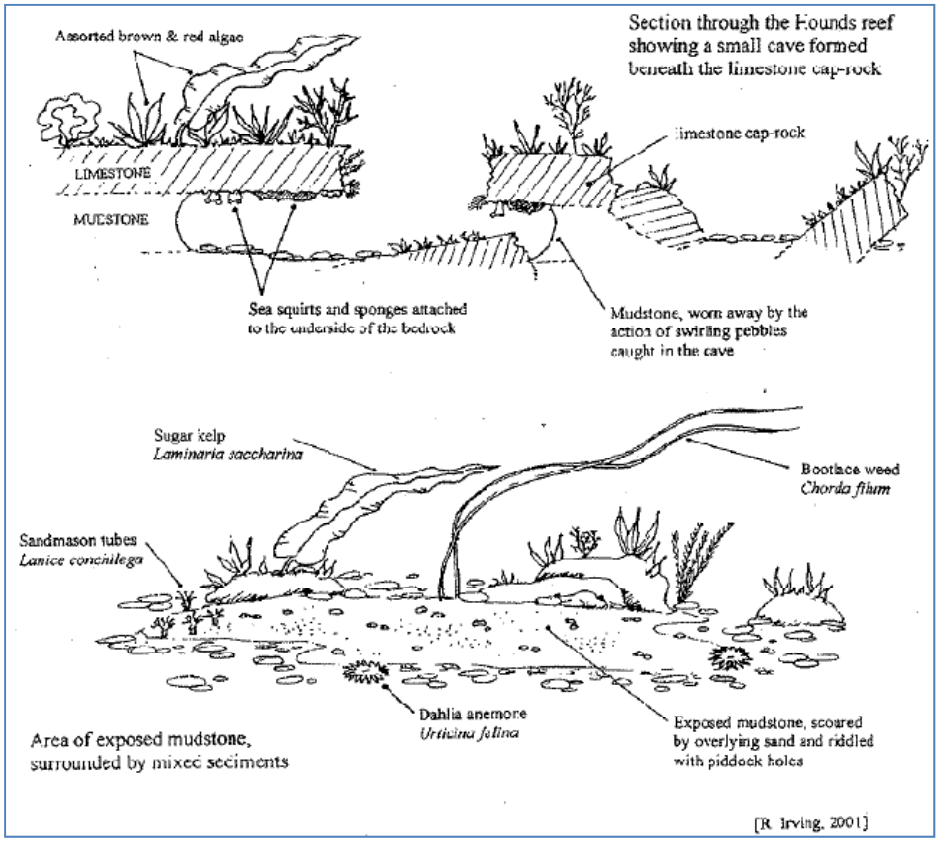


Figure 4. Diagrammatic representations of The Hounds geomorphology (from Irving, 1996)

With regard to habitat and species FOCI (see FOCI map), the Mixon Hole contains the most important examples of peat and clay exposures and the RSG therefore selected the northern slope as Reference Area for this feature (see rRA 12 Mixon Hole (Northern Slope)).

The Short-snouted Seahorse has been recorded from just outside this site near the lifeboat station, but although seahorses are thought to occur all along the Sussex coast, this site was not considered to be the best place to protect it and the boundary was not extended to include the record (Inshore Task Group, Feb 2011). However, to meet the ENG replication targets, the RSG has suggested this species be included as a feature for protection in this site, and recommend that further survey work is undertaken to see if the distribution extends within the boundaries of the rMCZ.

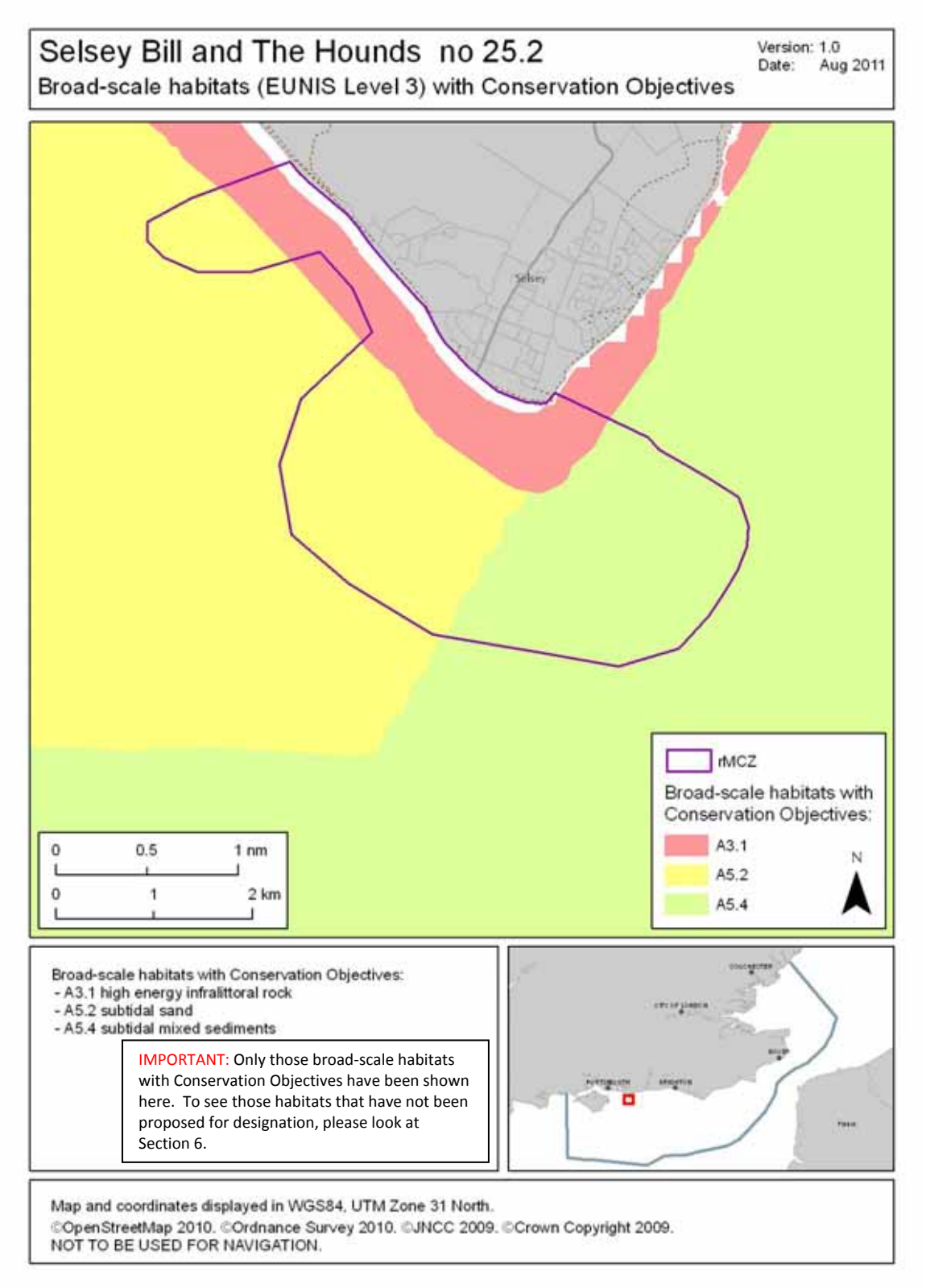
Original FOCI data layers provided to the project (Seely et al, 2010 DEFRA MB102 2B; Seely et al, 2010 DEFRA MB102C) suggested that Common Maerl (*Phymatolithon calcareum*) was present just south of the current boundaries of the site, but local stakeholders did not think this was a valid record and the RSG did not extend the boundaries to include it (RSG 5, Oct 2010). This decision was supported by the Science Advisory Panel (SAP feedback on 2nd Progress Report, July 2010), which concurred that no recent records of Common Maerl were known to them[5]. Similarly, there is a single record of the Ocean Quahog off Selsey (Seely et al, 2010 DEFRA MB102 2B), but Kent Wildlife Trust determined that this was erroneous (meeting with KWT 21.01.2011).

Along the northwestern coastline, a section of the geological feature, Bracklesham Bay (national contract data, MB102 2A), is incorporated into the site boundaries, where the Earnley Clay Formation exposes Eocene fossils along the beach (see Geology map). The Sussex Archaeology Society has information on the 'Gallo-Belgique' archaeology of the area.

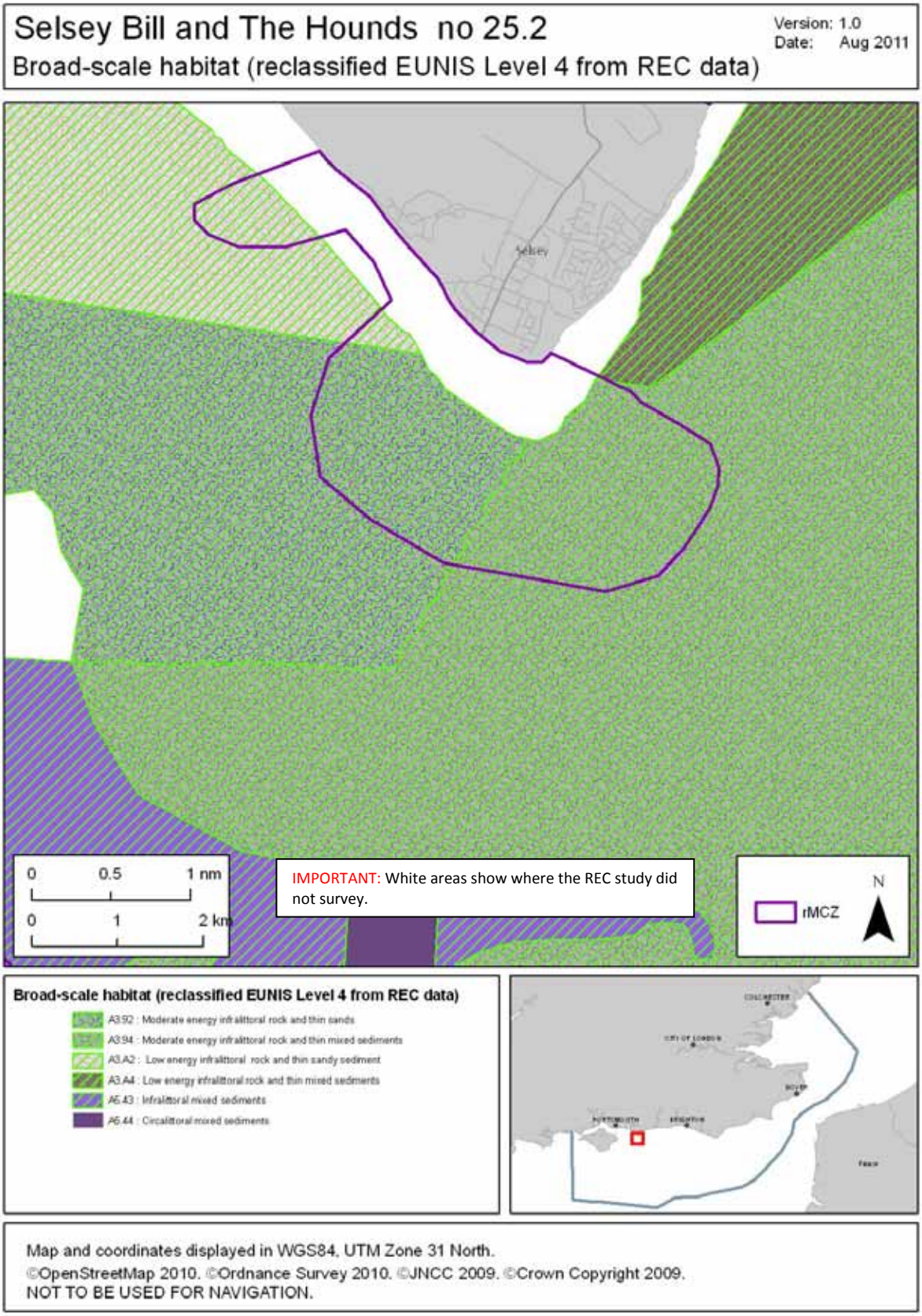
This rMCZ is well known for its high biodiversity created by the unusual seabed topography and indicated by the benthic biotope richness data (Jackson et al, 2009 DEFRA MB102 2F). The RSPB have

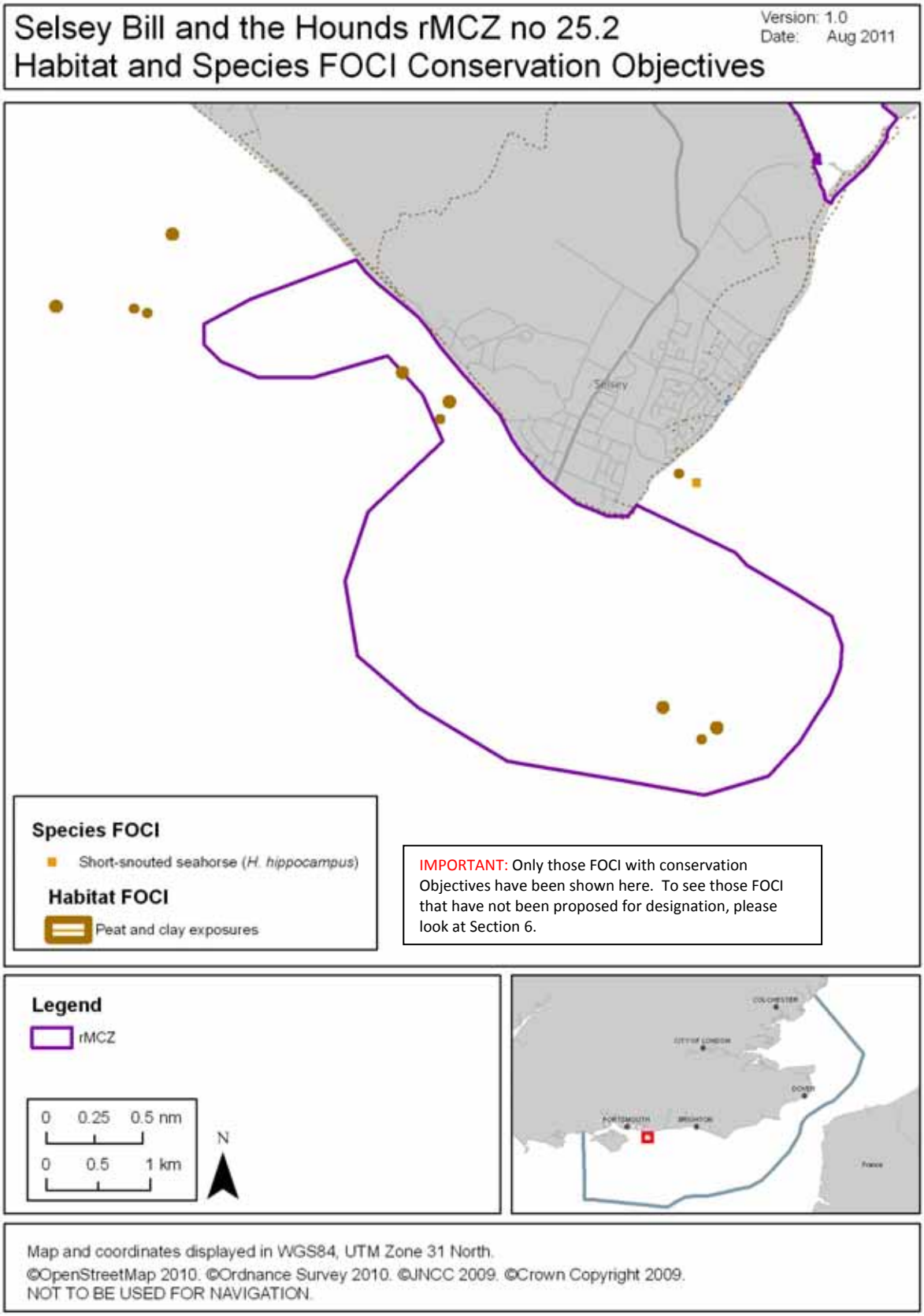
[5] Subsequent to the SAP feedback, a Natural England survey of the South Isle of Wight revealed a maerl bed (see rMCZ 22 Bembridge and rRA 21 Culver Spit)

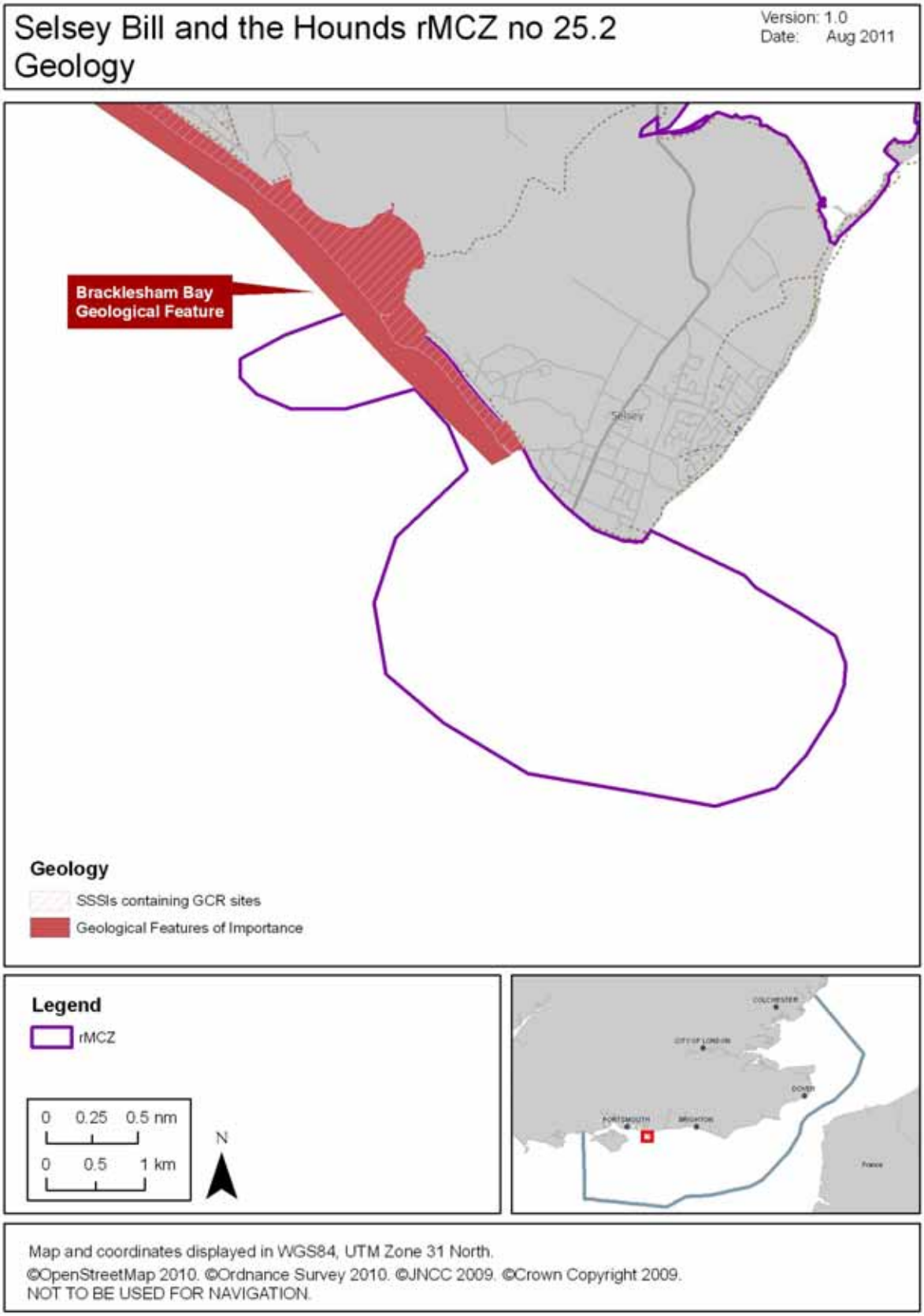
gathered information have noted that Selsey Bill and The Hounds is a crucial foraging area for Common Tern, Little Tern and Sandwich Turn in the spring, and for nearby breeding birds in the summer. Local stakeholders have also noted that The Hounds and The Streets are important haul-out sites for seals (Inshore Task Group, Feb 2011). The Wildlife Trusts have identified species and habitats rare and important in the southeast region and provided spatial data to support their inclusion in the MPA network. Their data show that hard rock reefs and Ross Coral (*Pentapora foliacea)* occur here (see Southeast Features map). This is one of the Key Inshore Biodiversity Areas in the Balanced Seas Region recommended as an MCZ by the South East England Biodiversity Forum (SEEBF, 2010).



Selsey Bill and the Hounds rMCZ no 25.2




Selsey Bill and the Hounds rMCZ no 25.2
Habitat and Species FOCI Conservation Objectives
Version: 1.0
Date: Aug 2011
Selsey
Species FOCI
Short-snouted seahorse (H. hippocampus)
Habitat FOCI
Peat and clay exposures
IMPORTANT: Only those FOCI with conservation Objectives have been shown here. To see those FOCI that have not been proposed for designation, please look at Section 6.
Legend
rMCZ
0 0.25 0.5 nm
0 0.5 1 km
N
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.


Selsey Bill and the Hounds rMCZ no 25.2
Geology
Version: 1.0
Date: Aug 2011
Bracklesham Bay
Geological Feature
Selsey
Geology
SSSIs containing GCR sites
Geological Features of Importance
Legend
rMCZ
0 0.25 0.5 nm
0 0.5 1 km
N
COLCHESTER
CITY OF LONDON
DOVER
PORTSMOUTH
BRIGHTON
France
Map and coordinates displayed in WGS84, UTM Zone 31 North.
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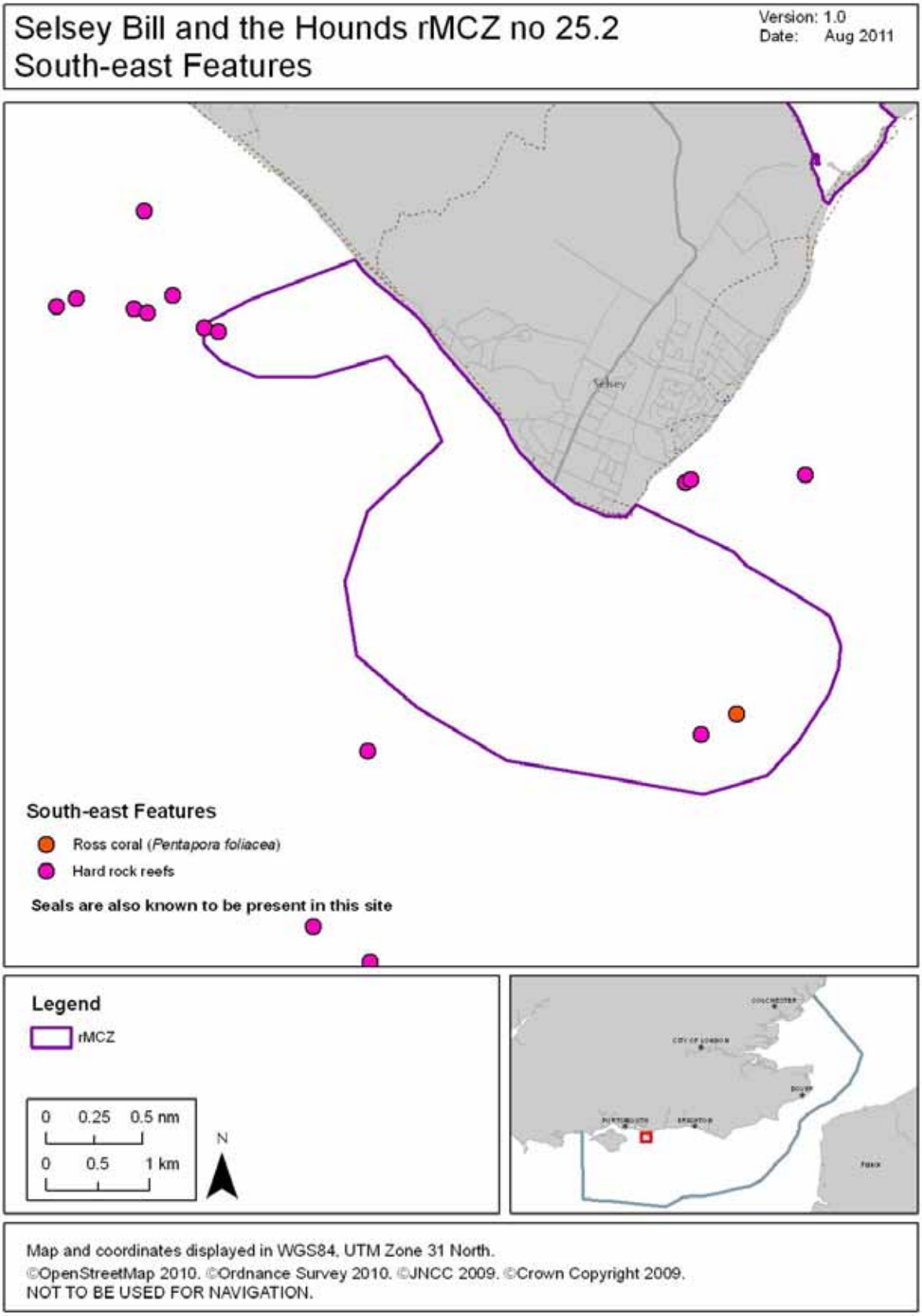
Selsey Bill and the Hounds rMCZ no 25.2
South-east Features
Version: 1.0
Date: Aug 2011
Selsey
South-east Features
Ross coral (Pentapora foliacea)
Hard rock reefs
Seals are also known to be present in this site
Legend
rMCZ
0 0.25 0.5 nm
0 0.5 1 km
N
Map and coordinates displayed in WGS84, UTM Zone 31 North.
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NOT TO BE USED FOR NAVIGATION.

10. Site boundary

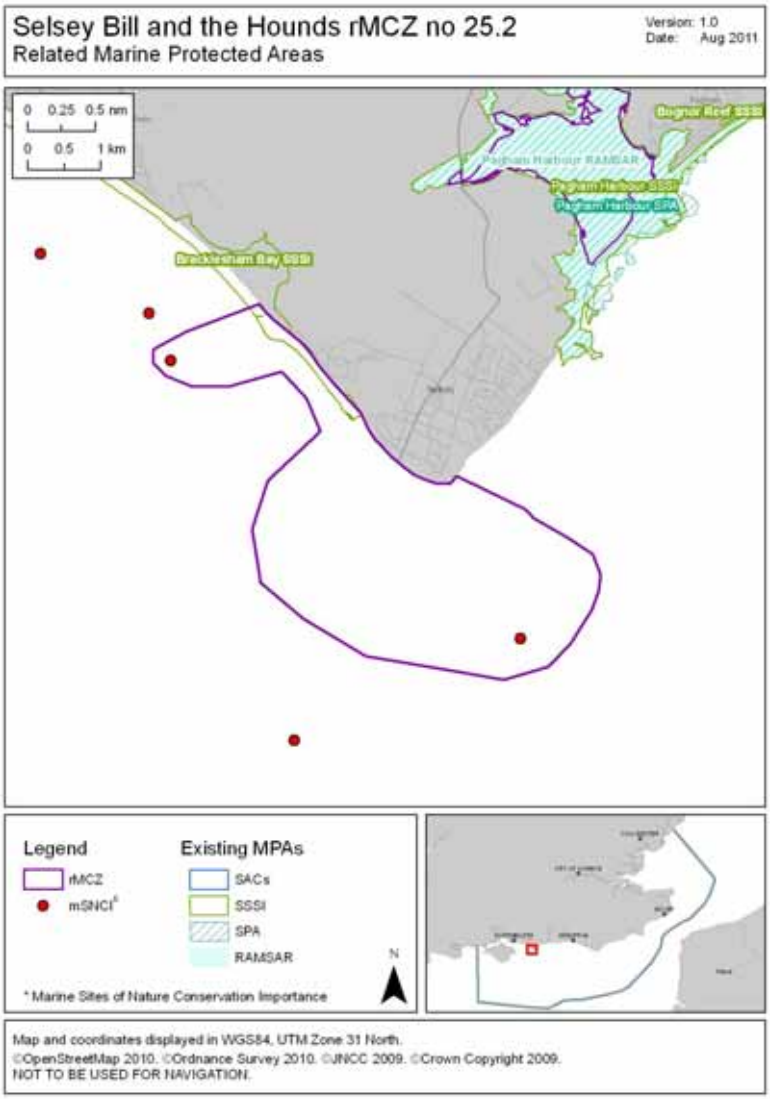
The landward boundary of the site is defined by the Mean High Water limit from just north of The Hounds to just east of Selsey Bill lighthouse. The seaward boundary of the site aims to capture the important rocky clay and limestone outcroppings, which fall into two distinct areas, the Hounds and the circular group of the Streets, the Grounds, the Mixon and the Malt Owers. The boundaries have been drawn around these from high quality bathymetry maps and nautical charts, and are supported by the fishing industry, which has important fishing grounds between these two areas.

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

The site overlaps with Bracklesham Bay SSSI, designated for its geological interest. The Hounds and Mixon Hole were identified as mSNCIs [6] in 2001 by West and East Sussex County Council.



[6] mSNCIs are non-statutory sites identified on account of their special interest with regard to habitat, wildlife, geology or geomorphology by East and West Sussex County Councils

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

Information	Type of information	Source	Name of survey	Date
Broad-scale habitat	Modelled and survey data	JNCC V.7 Combined UKSeaMap and MESH	Combined	June 2011
Broad-scale habitat	Modelled data	MALSF REC	Synthesis study of central and eastern English Channel	2011
Geology	Literature search	National Contract Data. DEFRA MB102 2A	Mapping of Geological and Geomorphological Features	2009
Peat and clay exposures	Survey	National contract data, DEFRA MB102 2C	Multiple	17/09/1995 and 12/07/1997
Peat and clay exposures	Survey	Kent Wildlife Trust		1997
Native oyster beds	Survey	Marine recorder extract Sept 2010 (via KWT)		01/01/1982
Subtidal sands and gravels	Survey	National contract data, DEFRA MB102 2C	Multiple	1994-1997
Native oyster (*O.edulis*)	Survey	National contract data, DEFRA MB102 2B		1982-1994
Short snouted seahorse (*Hippocampus hippocampus*)	Survey	National contract data, DEFRA MB102 2B		

References (additional information can be found in the Bibliography)

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JAMES, J W C, PEARCE, B, COGGAN, R A, LEIVERS, M. CLARK, R W E, PLIM, J F, HILL, J M, ARNOTT, S H L, BATESON, L, DE-BURGH THOMAS, A AND, BAGGALEY, P A. 2011. The MALSF synthesis study in the central and eastern English Channel. British Geological Survey Open Report OR/11/01. 158pp. Published by MALSF.

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SEELEY, B., HIGGS, S., LEAR, D., EVANS, J., NEILLY, M., CAMPBELL, M., WILKES, P., ADAMS, L., 2010. *Accessing 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.

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.

West Beach Selsey Residents Group. Email from JN. 20.3.11. Re Balanced Seas – Selsey Area MCZ/Stakeholder Group

14. Stakeholder support for the site

The RSG as a group reached consensus that this site should be put forward in their final recommendations.

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 Selsey Bill and Hounds rMCZ 25.2
Yachting	RYA	Needs to be reviewed in light of revised vulnerability assessment to check no impact in coastal defence.
Kite Surfing	British Kite Surfing Association	Supported - needs more data/surveys.
Sea Angling		Support maintain to protect recreational sea angling.
Fishing	Local Fisheries Representatives	Satisfied that support will grow subject to no further modification to site.
Fishing - FPO, beam trawling		Reasonable local support - as long as potting is allowed to continue.
Birds	RSPB	Support site and COs covering whole area. MCZ will not hinder coastal defence activity of shingle beach recharge at Selsey, although it may mean shingle cannot be sourced from within MCZ.
Wildlife Trusts	Hampshire Wildlife Trust	I support this site, it is a result of a significant compromise. Any further reduction in size will seriously reduce ecological integrity.
Marine Ecology	Seasearch	Strongly support this area, but it should be larger to enclose the other marine SNCIs close by rather than being restricted to lightly following two rocky outcrop areas. The site represents a large compromise from the SEEBF proposal.
Marine Wildlife	Marine Conservation Society	Support site. Recover CO for all broadscale habitats to protect and recover from bottom towed fishing.
Statutory environmental	Environment Agency	EA support this. Any shingle taken from the marine environment to support sea defences would come from a licensed extraction site. If shingle recycling occurs for sea defence maintenance work will be subject to EIA as it is currently.
Heritage and Archaeology	English Heritage	Support with usual provisons as lots of archaology etc… on the littoral.

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[7] and then sense-checked at the national level[8]. Where a RECOVER objective is noted, the associated activity causing the pressure is indicated. In some cases, where data and information warranted 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.

[7] The process of establishing conservation objectives is outlined in the Conservation Objectives Guidance (JJNCC /NE 2011)

[8] VA results were standardised across all four regional projects but the fisheries activity data is still undergoing assessment.

Selsey Bill and the Hounds rMCZ no 25.2

Feature	REC habitats	Draft CO	Activity exerting pressure	IFCA/MMO/EA/NE Comments	Stakeholder comments on draft COs and potential management measures
A3.1 high energy infralittoral rock		TO BE ASSESSED	Fishing – potting / creeling	This habitat did not have a vulnerability assessment undertaken prior to the final RSG meeting (RSG 11, Aug 2011) as it was omitted in error from the list of features occurring in the site. However, the RSG recommended that all broad-scale habitats be protected in this site and therefore the feature has been included for protection. More detailed assessment will be required of levels of fishing and discussion with IFCA before a CO can be set. N.B. Channel Coastal Observatory data should be used to define the actual habitat occurring in this area, as it is likely that the habitat would be reclassified .	
A5.2 Subtidal Sand	A3.92 ME infralittoral rock & thin sands A3.A2 LE infralittoral rock & thin sandy sediment	MAINTAIN (to be reassessed with REC data)		Selection of the appropriate REC habitats for protection was undertaken at the final RSG meeting and not discussed with the Local Group. This will require a more detailed Vulnerability Assessment to be undertaken in order to produce the appropriate CO.	
A5.4 Subtidal mixed sediments	A3.A4 LE infra-littoral rock & thin mixed sediments A3.94 ME infra-littoral rock and thin mixed sediments	(TO BE REASSESSED according to the REC data habitats and refined CCO data)	Fishing – potting /creeling	IFCA recommend that the forthcoming CCO data be used to refine these REC habitats to distinguish the rocky outcrops and that the CO should be MAINTAIN. A more detailed Vulnerability Assessment will be required to produce the appropriate CO. IFCA are responsible for determining the number of pots allowed in the area SNCBs have said that coastal defence will not be affected by the MCZ although there might have to be restrictions on extracting the shingle from this habitat and therefore materials for coastal defence may have to be sourced from elsewhere. EA has said that coastal realignment under shoreline management plan will not be affected.	The LG (July 2011) noted that: • This is the major potting ground on the South Coast and is heavily used but the gear type does not impact coarse sediment; fishermen work closely with local divers to make sure their activities are not impacting the seabed • Fisheries sector and other participants want this CO to be MAINTAIN, given that this feature is are not thought to be impacted by this activity • Shingle which would be included in subtidal mixed sediments is needed for coastal defence – Selsey Town Council will not support any area that hinders coastal defence.
Peat and clay exposures		MAINTAIN (for MCZ only)			This has been selected as the feature for protection within the rRA 12 Mixon Hole (Northern Slopes). Should this go forward, the CO will be 'RECOVER to reference condition'.
Bracklesham Bay		MAINTAIN			

16. Evolution of the site recommendations

An area offshore and extending around Selsey Bill was first suggested by local stakeholders (Sussex & S Kent Local Group, July 2010) to capture the unusual geology found within various mSNCIs (e.g. Mixon Hole, Bracklesham Balls), as well as peat and clay exposures and Important Plant Areas. A slightly larger site became a broad area of interest as the RSG extended the boundaries up to MHW (RSG 5, Oct 2010). In order to capture some of the additional richness of the region, the site boundaries were significantly extended to include Pagham Harbour and the offshore area outside the harbour, where two mSNCIS (the Inner and Outer Mulberrys) were known to support rich biological communities (Sussex & S Kent Local Group Nov 2010).

Later discussions regarding the features of the site suggested that the site boundaries should be split into two distinct areas – Selsey and Pagham – as the features of interest were significantly different and it was felt that combining the two would result in the inclusion of a large area of seabed that did not need protection and that is important to the local fishing feet. The Inner and Outer Mulberrys are artificial reefs (wrecks) and thus not considered to merit protection through the MCZ process which is concerned with natural features as laid out in the ENG; a byelaw rather than an MCZ was felt to be a more appropriate way to protect them (Sussex & S Kent Inshore Task Group, Dec 2010).

Discussions with local stakeholders raised the concerns of fishermen using the immediate area and various options were considered for an appropriate boundary that might maintain the integrity of the features of interest (biodiverse rocky reefs) whilst minimising the impact on local fisheries. A compromise was reached in the form of the present boundary, which captures the reef complex off Selsey Bill (including the Mixon Hole and The Streets) and The Hounds, but allows an indented boundary between the two features to avoid important local fishing grounds (Selsey Site Mtg, Feb 2010). This newer boundary excluded the Bracklesham Balls geological feature (national contract data, DEFRA MB102 2A) as well as the permanent moorings. Two separate sites, Pagham Harbour (rMCZ 25.1) and Selsey Bill and The Hounds (rMCZ 25.2), were therefore put forward in the Draft Final Recommendations and this site has not had adjustments to its boundaries since then.

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.

17. Implications for Stakeholders

Local stakeholders are extremely concerned about the potential impact of an MCZ on their activities and have actively lobbied the project team, relevant public authorities and Members of Parliament. The following issues are associated with this site:

- Shoreline management and coastal defence is a major concern for local stakeholders due to two schemes: the EA's Medmerry scheme and the private Bunn Leisure scheme. The Environment Agency has said that the proposed MCZ should not prevent coastal defence work, and that any shingle necessary would have to be sourced from a location outside the rMCZ. Breaching of the seawalls at Medmerry, to the northwest of Selsey Bill, will be part of the future managed realignment. This may change the ecology of the area over the next few years and will need to be taken into consideration in the development of this rMCZ if it goes ahead.
- This is one of the major fisheries potting grounds on the south coast and there will only be support from this sector if their activities are allowed to go ahead, as currently managed through the IFCA;
- The RSG felt that where higher quality REC data occurred, these habitats should be used to undertake the vulnerability assessment rather than the 'back-translated' EUNI S Level 3.

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.