

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 North Mistley recommended Reference Area no. 22	3. Site surface area 144 ha 1.44 km ²
2. Site centre location ETRS89 N51 57' 10.071" E1 5' 26.994" N51 57.168' E1 5.450' (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 North Mistley rRA ¹

Feature type	Feature name	Area / No. of records ²
Broad Scale Habitats	A2.3 Intertidal mud	1.09km ²
Habitat FOCI	Blue Mussel Beds	0.07 km ²
Species FOCI	Starlet sea anemone (<i>N.vectensis</i>)	1 record

6. Other features occurring within the North Mistley rRA (to be protected)

None

7. Map of site (see below)

8. Site summary

The site encompasses a small intertidal bay on the northern shore of the Stour Estuary in Suffolk, opposite Mistley on the southern bank. It contains a population of the nationally scarce brackish water species, the Starlet Sea anemone (*Nematostella vectensis*), which is already protected by the Stour Estuary SSSI. It is typically found in creeks that run over the mudflats of both estuaries. Since no suitable site could be found as an rRA for this species FOCI within the project area, this location was recommended. Intertidal mud is found throughout the site and is fully protected through the Stour Estuary SSSI and Stour & Orwell Estuaries SPA, and this would make a suitable location for an RA for it.

Blue Mussel beds were found in a number of Unicomarine surveys (2011) conducted for Harwich Haven Authority within the Stour and Orwell Estuaries, one of which is captured within this site. Local stakeholders (Essex/Thames/Suffolk Sites Meeting, July, 2011) suggested that this feature may no longer occur at this location. K&E IFCA is not aware of any blue mussel beds here. The Eastern IFCA has 74 sampling stations that are regularly surveyed within the estuary and Blue Mussel beds have been found in only three, none of which is this site. Both IFCAs have reservations as to the suitability of this site as an rRA for this feature. The RSG (RSG Meeting 11, 2/3 August 2011) suggested that the SNCBs should obtain more robust data from the Eastern IFCA about the presence and distribution of this feature before designation. However, the RSG still wish to recommend this site as they are aware that the alternative site for this species is Colne Point rRA 1, which is also not considered to be the best example of the feature.

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. A "record" is a survey point where a single individual, population or habitat has been found.

9. Detailed site description

For further details please see detailed site description for rMCZ 2 Stour & Orwell Estuaries.

10. Site boundary

The landward side of the site is defined by the Mean High Water mark (from OS data) and the site has been drawn in order to capture as much of the Blue Mussel beds as possible.

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.”

12. Sites to which this site is related

The rRA lies within the Stour Estuary SSSI, and Stour and Orwell Estuaries SPA and the Stour and Orwell Estuaries RAMSAR site. The site is near to the Stour Estuary RSPB reserve

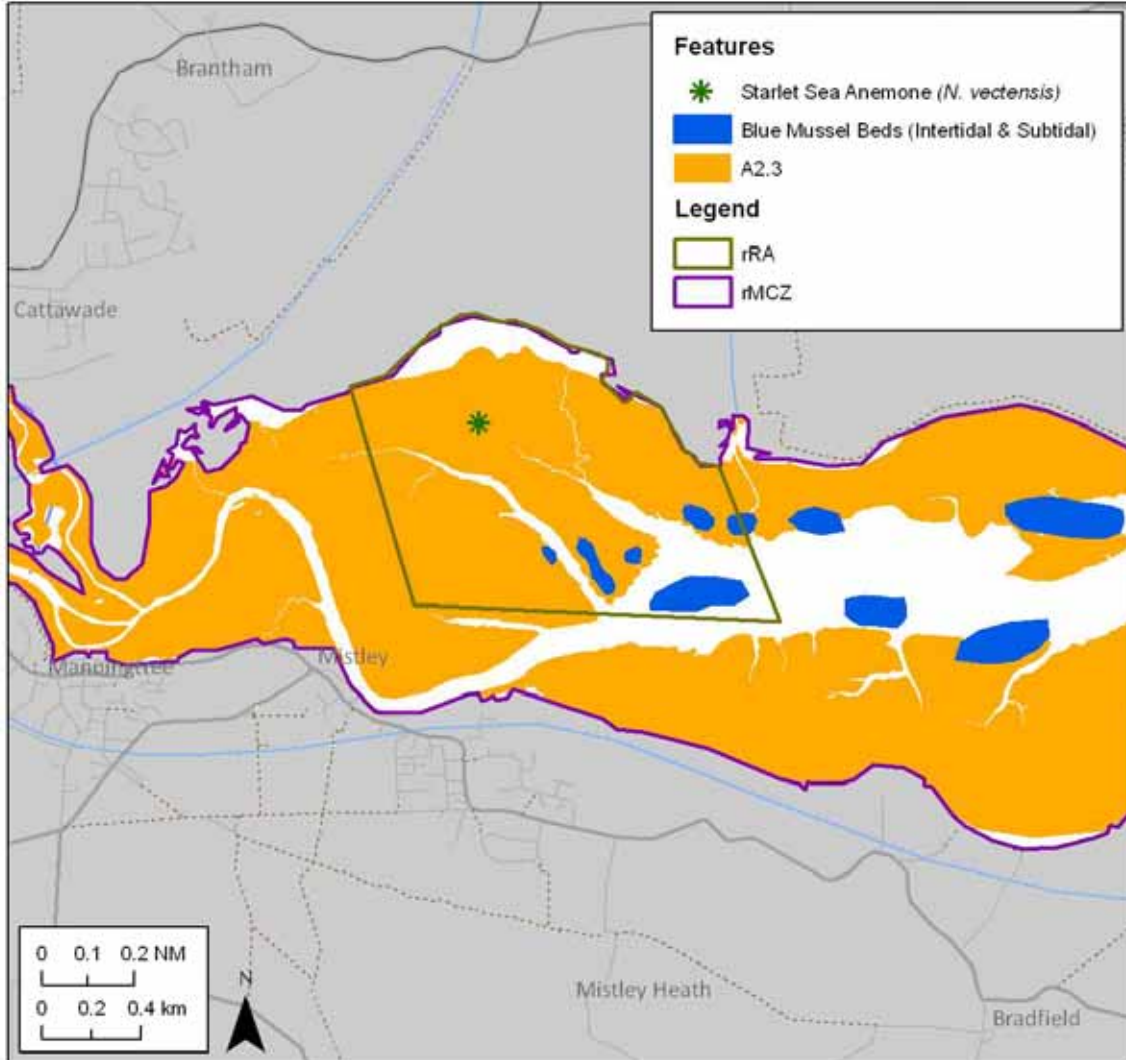
13. Supporting documentation (information relating to ENG features only)

Information	Type of information	Source	Name of survey	No of points	Dates
All broad scale habitats	Modelled and survey data	UKSeaMap/MESH v7	Combined	n/a	2011
Blue Mussels	Survey	Unicomarine (via Harwich Haven Authority)	July 2008 Survey	n/a	July 2008
Starlet Sea Anemone (Nematostella vectensis)	Survey	National Contract Data DEFRA MB102 2B	JNCCMNCR10000342	1	31/08/1992

References

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

North Mistley
Recommended Reference Area no 22



Features to be protected within reference area:

- A2.3 Intertidal mud
- Sheltered muddy gravels
- Starlet Sea Anemone (*N. vectensis*)



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.

North Mistley rRA no 22

14. Stakeholder support for the site

The Local Group broadly supported this site with the exception of the recreational sea angling sector noting the concerns over the suitability of the site for Blue Mussel beds. The RSG as a group reached consensus that this site should be put forward in their Final Recommendations noting that this is probably not a good site for blue mussels but there are few other options; further survey work would be needed before any 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 North Mistley rRA 22
Yachting	RYA	Neutral, because of doubts about site suitability.
Kitesurfing		Seems like a good opportunity to recover species of blue mussel, even if not widely seen.
RSA		Concerns raised by local RSA on location and impact - need more research. Cannot support.
Ports		Buffer zone for port maintenance dredge should be given.
Shellfisheries		Blue mussels existence to be clarified. Ideal for a recovery situation.
NUTFA		Broadly agree.
Fishing - FPO, beam trawling		Reasonable support.
Fishing - Over 10s, FPO, trawling sector (under and over 10m)		Doubt on mussel beds.
Offshore Renewables	EoN (on behalf of BWEA)	Not discussed on Wednesday.
Birds	RSPB	Mistley Point - support - possibly best place for starlet sea anemone as WSCC said this species has not been found in Pagham Lagoon for last 20 years.
Wildlie Trusts	Hants Wildlife Trust	Support.
Marine Ecology	Seasearch	Strongly support RA for starlet sea anemone, as one of few examples in the region. Mussels are less certain, so a better example in the region should be found.
Statutory Environmental	EA	Mistley Point - see comments for 16.
IFCA	Kent & Essex IFCA	Mistley - confirmation required to confirm if mussels and anemone are present at this site. General support - if this is confirmed.
IFCA	Southern IFCA	No comment - not in Southern IFCA district.
IFCA	Sussex IFCA	(No comment)
Heritage and archaeology	English Heritage	Mistley [no further comment]

15. Evolution of the site recommendations

This site was recommended for the Starlet Sea Anemone as an alternative site to Pagham Harbour, which had received much opposition from local stakeholders. The project team identified the North Mistley site, and then adjusted the boundaries according to the Blue Mussel bed records from Unicomarine seabed surveys when this data was made available to the project. The RSG has discussed the low confidence in the Blue Mussel data but have elected to recommend the site, given that the alternative (Colne Point rRA 1) is also thought to be a poor site for protection of this species.

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:

- The Stour is split between two IFCA districts (K&E IFCA and Eastern IFCA) and site management would therefore need involvement of both IFCAs
- Voluntary management plans and bait digging code of conduct in place for both estuaries set up and managed through the Stour & Orwell Estuaries Management Group; bait digging occurs within this site
- Recreational boat angling occurs within Holbrook Bay to the east of the site and up through the mid water channel near the seaward boundary of the site
- Navigational dredging occurs within the mid water channel which may affect the south east corner of the site
- Commercial potting occurs
- There may be managed realignment sites within or near 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.