

## Inner Bank rMCZ no 31

### 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 in July 2011 and finalised on 2/3 August 2011.

<b>1. Site name</b> Inner Bank rMCZ no 31	<b>3. Site surface area</b> 19903 ha      199.03 km <sup>2</sup>
<b>2. Site centre location</b> ETRS89 N50 44' 3.603" E0 52' 50.618" N50 44.060' E0 52.844' (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 Inner Bank <sup>1</sup>

Feature type	Feature name	REC Broad-scale Habitats (L4/L3)	Area / No. of records <sup>2</sup>
Broad-scale habitats	A5.1 subtidal coarse sediment	Occurs in the area not surveyed by the REC data	2.96 km <sup>2</sup>
REC Broad-scale habitat	A3.2 ME infralittoral rock	A3.2 ME infralittoral rock	19.80 km <sup>2</sup>
	A4.2 ME circalittoral rock	A4.2 ME circalittoral rock	96.45 km <sup>2</sup>
		A4D.2 ME deep circalittoral rock	
	A5.2 subtidal sand	A4.92 ME rock and thin sandy sediment	79.78 km <sup>2</sup>
		A3.92 ME infralittoral rock and thin sands	
		A4D.92 ME deep circalittoral rock and thin sands	
		A5.23 infralittoral fine sand	
		A5.25 circalittoral fine sand	
	A5.26 circalittoral muddy sand		
	A5.27 deep circalittoral sand		
Habitat FOCI	Native Oyster beds		1 record
Species FOCI	Native Oyster ( <i>Ostrea edulis</i> )		1 record

#### 6. Features within Inner Bank not proposed for designation

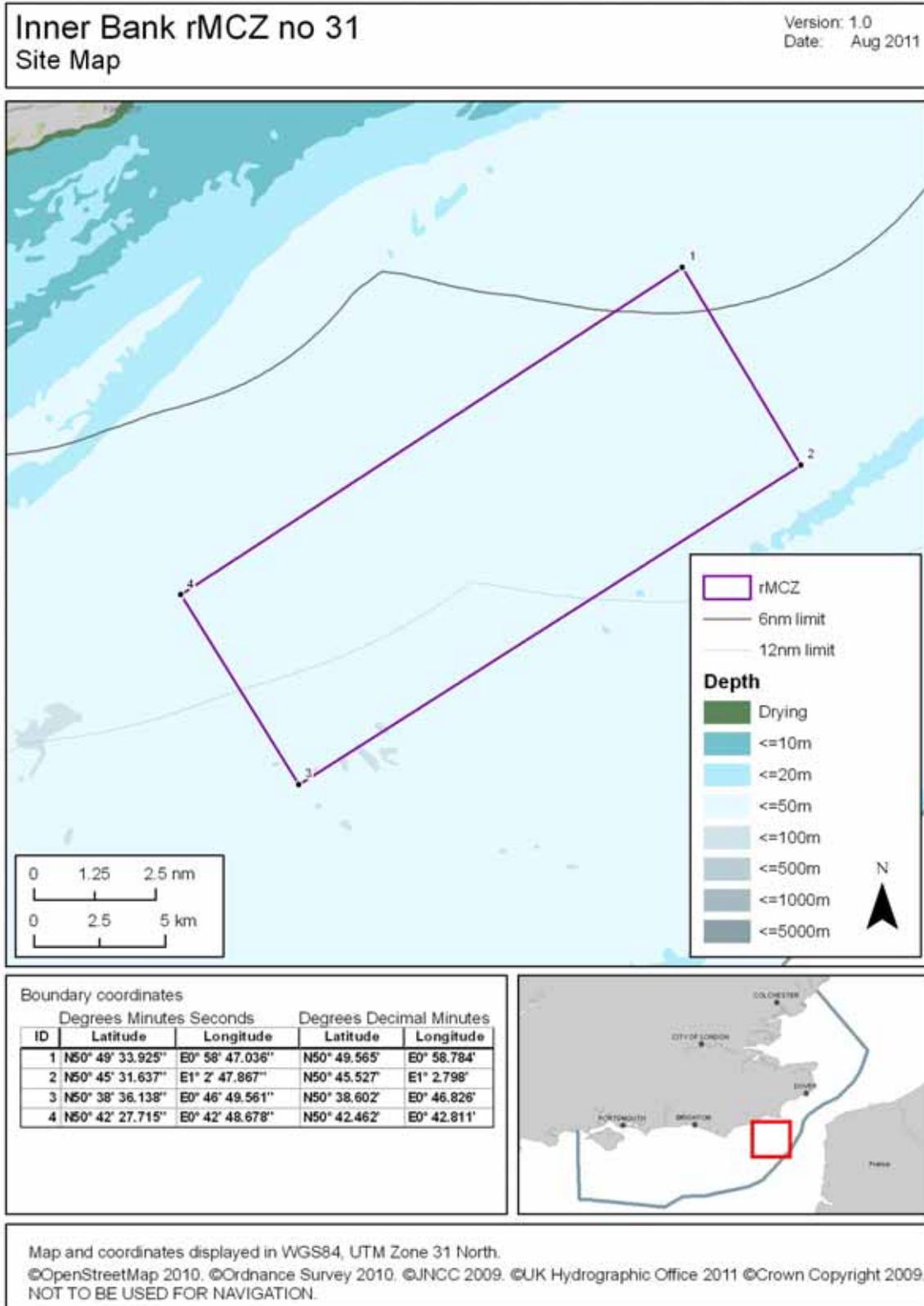
None

<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.

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## 7. Map of site (see below)



### 8. Site summary

The site is situated within the inner English Channel shipping lane that runs inside the Bullock Bank due south of Dungeness, and straddles both the 6 nm and 12 nm lines. The main feature of interest is the moderate energy circalittoral rock (A 5.1) that is fully exposed from the surrounding subtidal sand. This rock exposure forms the end of the Palaeochannel, the geological remnant of an ancient river system, and is surrounded by a number of finer-scale habitats, including part of the deeper sand of the Palaeovalley itself. The area is known to be high in benthic species richness and the northern edge of the site demonstrates relatively high pelagic biodiversity.

This site originally lay slightly further to the west, but was moved east to meet the shortfall broad-scale habitats (A5.1 and 5.2) in areas of higher confidence and biodiversity. The south western two thirds of the site lie in the area covered by the REC data survey and thus have high data confidence as the broad scale habitats are classified by this more detailed analysis. The only broad scale habitat data available for the eastern part of the site is UKSeaMap/MESH.

To achieve the draft conservation objectives, benthic trawling and shellfish harvesting are considered to need restriction. The site lies across three different fisheries management regimes as it crosses both the 6nm and 12nm line, and further review and discussions will be needed with the relevant regulatory bodies and sectors that might be impacted.

### 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.

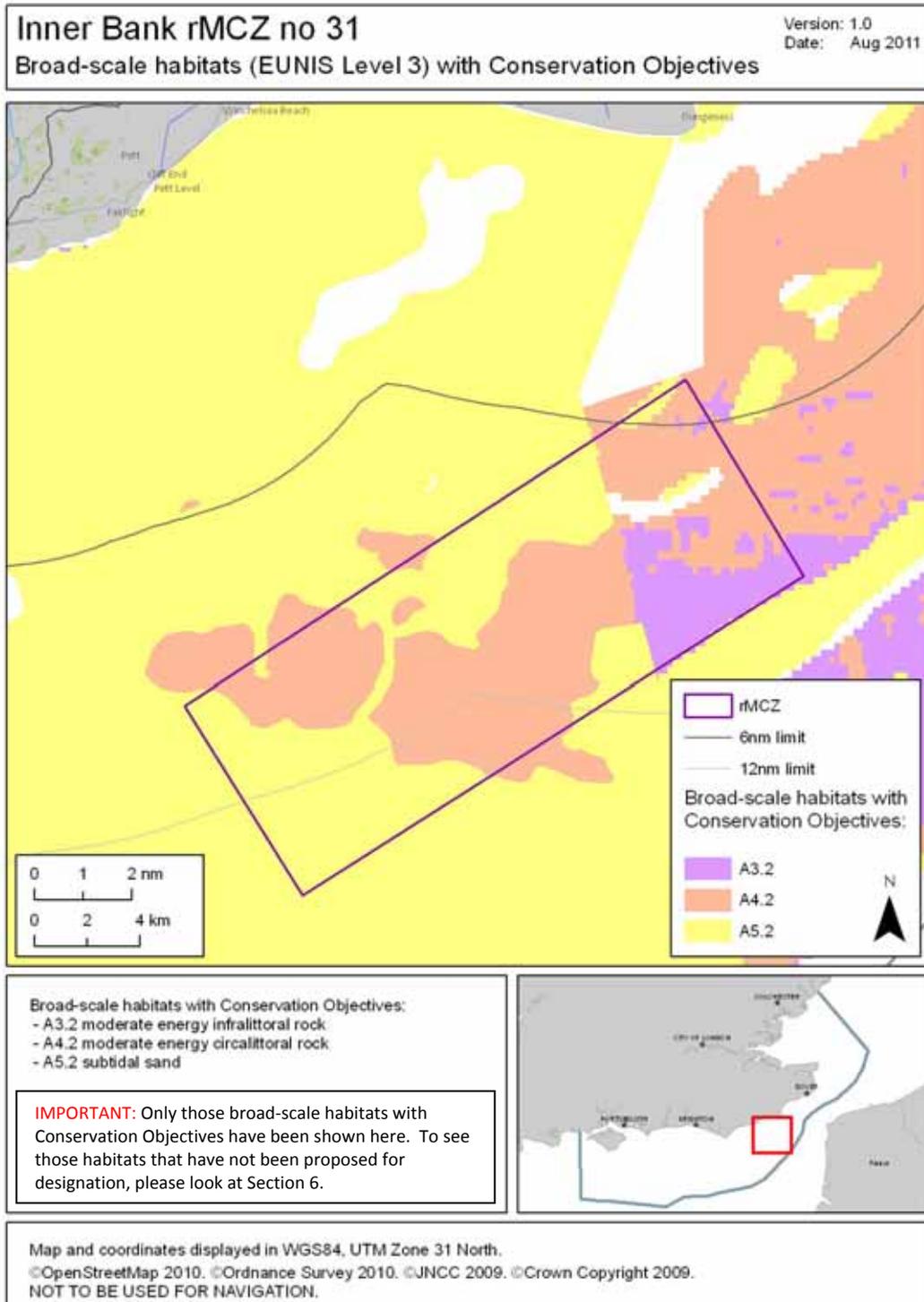
The site is situated within the inner English Channel shipping lane that runs inside the Bullock Bank due south of Dungeness. The site is positioned at the end of the Paleochannel, the geological remnant of an ancient river system. The site is designed to protect the rarer rock habitats in the Balanced Seas region, but confidence in the occurrence of these habitats is not equally high across the site. According to the UKSeaMap/MESH (v7 JNCC) data, the site comprises subtidal sand (A5.2), coarse sediment (A5.1) and moderate energy circalittoral (A4.2) and infralittoral (A3.2) rock (see Broad-scale habitats map, below). However the south western two thirds of the site was recently surveyed through the MALSF Synthesis of the central and eastern English Channel Regional Environmental Characterisation (REC, James *et al.* 2011), which provides a much higher level of resolution and confidence for the seabed habitats (see RECEUNIS level 4 map) . The broad-scale habitat map shows clearly the extent of the REC survey in the southwest of the site, and the point at which the resolution of the rock habitat distribution changes.

The majority of the site is thus considered to be A4.2 Moderate energy circalittoral rock, as surveyed by the REC (with high data confidence). Although it has been included as a feature for protection, the infralittoral rock (A3.2) present in the northern part of the site was not mapped by the REC survey but occurs immediately outside the area of the REC survey, suggesting the classification of this habitat may be dependent on the survey methodology. A lower confidence in the infralittoral rock was given by the British Geological Survey advisor to the Balanced Seas project, who suggested that outcropping A3.2 infralittoral rock in the Dover Straits may be an artefact of the mapping process (BGS, email 16.05.2011.).

Native Oysters (species and beds) were recorded in the site in 1999 (CEFAS and national contract data) (see FOCI map), but RSG members consider that a resurvey is essential. The area is recorded

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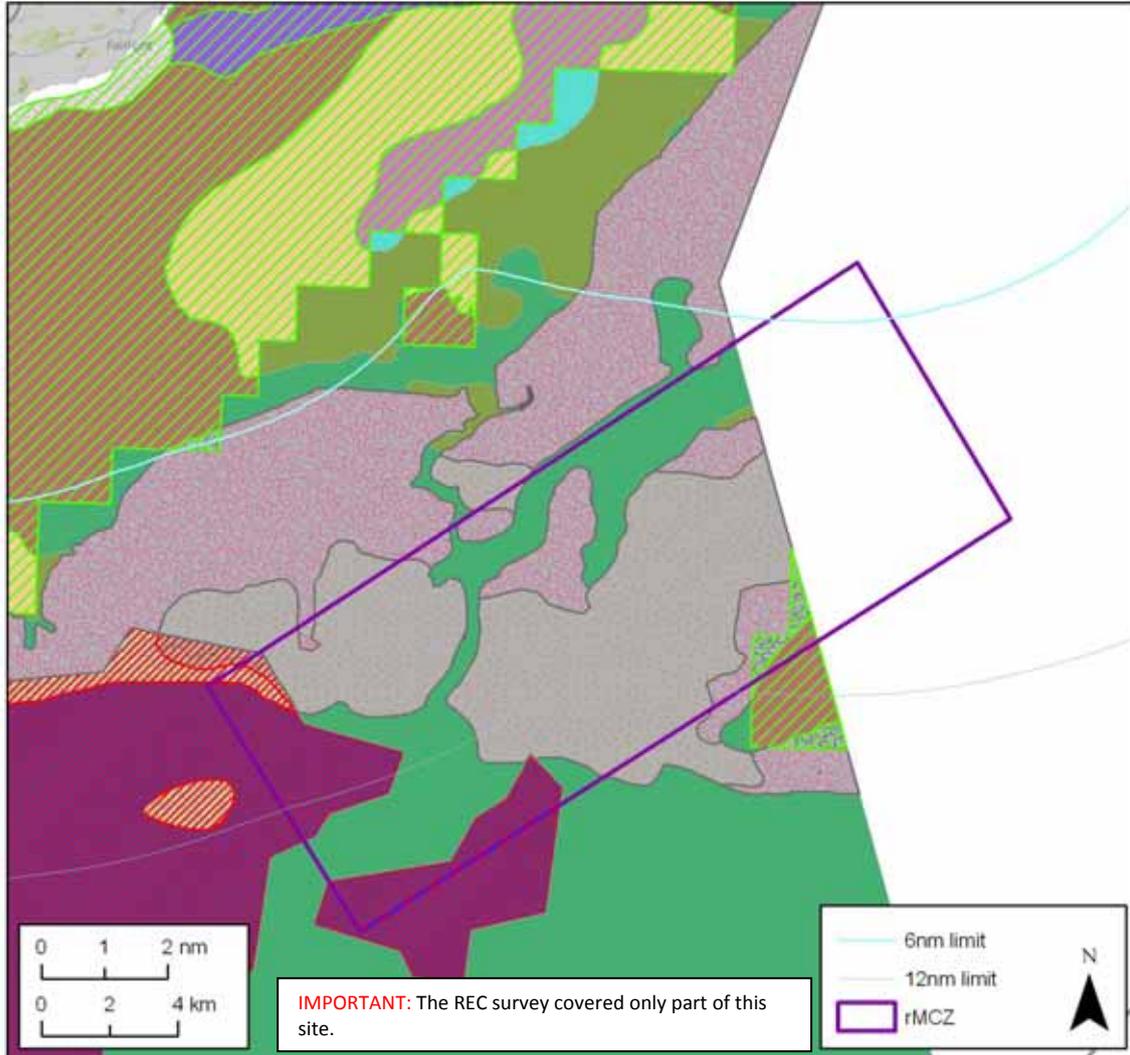
as being in the top 25% richest areas for benthic species in the Balanced Seas project area (national contract data).



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Broad-scale habitat (reclassified EUNIS Level 4 from REC data)



Broad-scale habitat (reclassified EUNIS Level 4 from REC data)

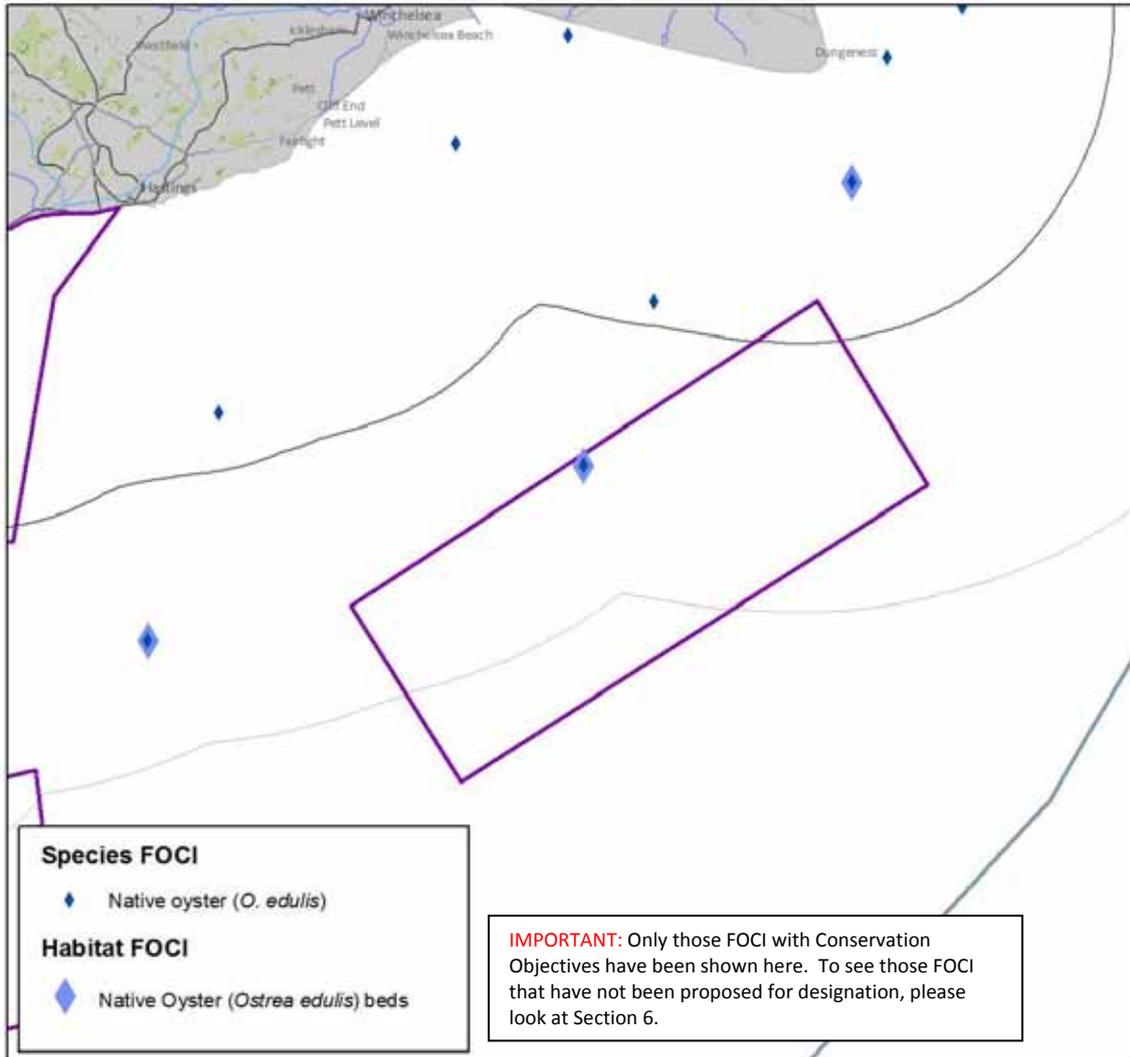
- A3.2 : Moderate energy infralittoral rock
- A3.92 : Moderate energy infralittoral rock and thin sands
- A4.2 : Moderate energy circalittoral rock
- A4.92 : Moderate energy rock and thin sandy sediment
- A4D.2 : Moderate energy deep circalittoral rock
- A4D.92 : Moderate energy deep circalittoral rock and thin sands
- A5.23 : Infralittoral fine sand
- A5.25 : Circalittoral fine sand
- A5.26 : Circalittoral muddy sand
- A5.27 : Deep Circalittoral sand



Map and coordinates displayed in WGS84, UTM Zone 31 North.  
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Inner Bank rMCZ no 31  
 Habitat and Species FOCI Conservation Objectives

Version: 1.0  
 Date: Aug 2011



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 NOT TO BE USED FOR NAVIGATION.

**10. Site boundary**

Within the region, the confidence of the broad-scale habitat map is higher for those areas surveyed in the English Channel Synthesis REC Study and this site lies over the eastern edge of this survey area, as seen in the map of Broad scale habitats. The boundary of the site was proposed to capture as much moderate energy infralittoral rock as possible as shown by the REC survey. The alignment of the site with the shipping lane, and overlapping with the 'turning circle' was deliberate in that fewer fisheries vessels operate here because of the movement of large ships, and there would thus be less likelihood of fisheries displacement.

**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 is not associated with any existing designation.

**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
Broad-scale habitats	Modelled data	MALSF REC	Synthesis study of Central and Eastern English Channel	2011
Native oyster beds	Survey	CEFAS	1999 Southern North Sea and eastern English Channel CEFAS 4m Beam Trawl Survey (Cory 8-99)	01/08/1999
Native oyster ( <i>O.edulis</i> )	Survey	National contract data, DEFRA MB102 2B		01/08/1999

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

British Geological Society email from BGS 17.05.2011. Re: Rock and thin sediment shapefiles.

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., 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.

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.

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### 14. Stakeholder support for the site

The RSG as a group reached consensus that this site should be put forward in their final recommendations. Within the group, support for the site was divided between those in favour (wildlife interests) and those not (fishing sectors).

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 Inner Bank rMCZ 31
Yachting	RYA	Needs survey on subtidal sediment and native oyster before taking further.
Sea Angling		Inner Bank recover to control bottom gear. RSA support maintain with gentleman's agreement. Scallop dredging is important to the Rye boats.
Fishing	Local Fisheries Representatives	No support.
Fishing – FPO, beam trawling		No support – extremely contentious for UK and foreign fleets alike. (Increased support if sand/sediment is changed to “maintain”.)
Birds	RSPB	Support site. Concerned about potential for removing oyster as a feature but I accept that re-survey might be necessary to confirm extent of oyster bed.
Wildlife Trusts	Hampshire Wildlife Trust	I support this site and the recover objectives.
Marine Ecology	Seasearch	Strongly support this site which supports a variety of habitats. Positioned in the shipping channel to be acceptable to fishing interests.
French fishing interests	CRPMEM Nord - Pas de Calais / Picardie	We are strongly against this site, very important for the French fleet (trawling and dredging activity from Boulogne-sur-Mer and Dunkirk (40-45 vessels) and from Haute Normandie). Presence of several Natura 2000 sites on the French side.

### 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>3</sup> and then sense-checked at the national level<sup>4</sup>. Where a RECOVER objective is noted, the associated activity causing the pressure is indicated. In some cases, where data and information merit 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

<sup>3</sup> The process of establishing conservation objectives is outlined in the [Conservation Objectives Guidance](#) (JNCC /NE 2011)

<sup>4</sup> VA results were standardised across all four regional projects but the fisheries activity data is still undergoing assessment.

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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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Feature	Draft CO	Activity Exerting Pressure	IFCA/MMO/EA/NE Comments	Stakeholder comments on draft COs and potential management measures
A3.2 Moderate energy infralittoral rock	RECOVER	Fishing - benthic trawling (bottom gear)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Within 6nm: Prohibition Order I enforced by IFCA</li> <li>• 6-12 nm: Prohibition Order through MMO and CFP agreement</li> <li>• Beyond 12nm: CFP alone</li> </ul>	The RSG said that set netting activity by Boulogne commercial fishing fleets occurs on the rock.
	RECOVER	Fishing - shellfish harvesting		
A4.2 Moderate energy circalittoral rock	RECOVER	Fishing - benthic trawling (bottom gear)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Within 6nm: Prohibition Order I enforced by IFCA</li> <li>• 6-12 nm: Prohibition Order through MMO and CFP agreement</li> <li>• Beyond 12nm: CFP alone</li> </ul>	
	RECOVER	Fishing - shellfish harvesting		
A5.1 Subtidal coarse sediment	RECOVER	Fishing - benthic trawling (bottom gear)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Within 6nm: Prohibition Order I enforced by IFCA</li> <li>• 6-12 nm: Prohibition Order through MMO and CFP agreement</li> <li>• Beyond 12nm: CFP alone</li> </ul>	The RSG fishing industry representatives noted that this sediment habitat is fundamental to the fleets from Rye and so the VA must be re-assessed thoroughly before any management is implemented.
	RECOVER	Fishing - shellfish harvesting		
A5.2 Subtidal Sand	RECOVER	Fishing - benthic trawling (bottom gear)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Within 6nm: Prohibition Order I enforced by IFCA</li> <li>• 6-12 nm: Prohibition Order through MMO and CFP agreement</li> <li>• Beyond 12nm: CFP alone</li> </ul>	Support would increase if the CO were MAINTAIN.
	RECOVER	Fishing - shellfish harvesting		
Native oyster ( <i>Ostrea edulis</i> )	RECOVER	Fishing - benthic trawling (bottom gear)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Within 6nm: Prohibition Order I enforced by IFCA</li> <li>• 6-12 nm: Prohibition Order through MMO and CFP agreement</li> <li>• Beyond 12nm: CFP alone</li> </ul>	RGS fishing representatives do not think that native oysters occur here other than occasional specimens; reportedly scallopers have not found them
	RECOVER	Fishing - shellfish harvesting		
Native oyster ( <i>Ostrea edulis</i> ) beds	RECOVER	Fishing - benthic trawling (bottom gear)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Within 6nm: Prohibition Order I enforced by IFCA</li> <li>• 6-12 nm: Prohibition Order through MMO and CFP agreement</li> <li>• Beyond 12nm: CFP alone</li> </ul>	Removal of native oysters as a feature was supported by all sectors apart from some of Wildlife sector, who consider that since the data points come from CEFAS, they are valid and indicate that this is a suitable place for oysters to recover.
	RECOVER	Fishing - shellfish harvesting		

### 16. Evolution of the site recommendations

In order to meet shortfall ENG targets, an area within the shipping lane was suggested in March 2011 (RSG Offshore Task Group), located so that the northeast corner lies over the 'turning circle' i.e. the point within the shipping lane where large commercial vessels turn and thus substantially restrict the activities of other vessels. This recommendation was taken to the RSG at their meeting in April 2011 (RSG 8) and was taken forward further at the May meeting (RSG 9), by which time the MALSF Synthesis of the central and eastern English Channel REC data had been incorporated into the project data. This revised classification meant that for some broad scale habitats, the proposed sites in the Balanced Seas project area no longer met the RSG targets.

The RSG had tasked the Project Team to suggest suitable areas to incorporate into the network. Marxan (the conservation planning decision support tool) was used to suggest sites that met the necessary shortfall ENG target habitats and captured areas of high biodiversity in the region, one of which was the area around the turning circle (RSG 9A, 17.05.2011). Taking this into account, and recognising the early recommendation for an MCZ within the turning circle, the Project Team suggested a site that would capture as much of the A4.2 circalittoral rock as possible, whilst keeping within the shipping lane and including the turning circle to minimise socio-economic impact as much as possible. The RSG accepted the site and it was discussed at their meeting in July (RSG 10); at the final meeting in August (RSG 11) it was agreed that this site should forward in the final recommendations with the associated stakeholder caveats (noting in particular that parts of the site are very important commercial fishing areas).

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

The issues associated with this site are:

- Lies across three management regimes, which will need consideration by the public authorities concerned.
- Sited in an area of intense usage by UK fleets— possibly 40-50 under and over 10m vessels operate, with trawling mainly in the northern part of the site and scalloping in the southern part. There is seasonal high intensity of static netting by the under 10m sector in the northeast part of the site on the Bullock Bank. This area is considered by the some fishing sectors to be the 'least worst' location to meet ENG targets and would be acceptable to several fishing sectors if rMCZ 29 (East Meridian) had not also been put forward as a final recommendation.
- At least part of this site is a key scalloping ground for the Rye fleet. The areas with sediment habitats (with draft COs of RECOVER) are important to the local fleets. Fishing representatives however requested that the data on activity levels be rechecked as they consider that it may be lower than indicated by the project; if it is, the vulnerability assessment should be redone
- Fishing sector would only support the inclusion of oysters if they were found to be on the rock habitats, which are avoided by the fleet. If they are found on the sediment, and therefore prevented trawling activity as a result, their inclusion would not be supported.
- Non-UK fishing is significant in this site. French and Belgian fleets have historic rights within the 6-12 nm part of the site; French, Belgian and Dutch fleets use the area beyond 12 nm;
  - French do not support this site (comments on Draft Final Recommendations, June 2011; and on Final Recommendations, Aug 2011) which includes key areas for French trawlers and scallop dredgers from Boulogne and Dunkirk (40-45 vessels) and Haute Normandie.

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- The wildlife sector requests that the vulnerability assessment for the site is reviewed and the REC data habitats taken into account.
- The Crown Estate note that the site contains both active and inactive cables but have registered their support for the recommendation.

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).