

Offshore Overfalls rMCZ no 17

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 LLocal Groups in July 2011 and finalised by the RSG 2/3 August 2011.

1. Site name Offshore Overfalls rMCZ no 17	3. Site surface area 59297 ha 592.97 km ²
2. Site centre location ETRS89 N50 29' 39.398" W0 43' 19.303" N50 29.657' W0 43.322' (N.B. WGS 84 UTM 31N coordinates are provided in the map vertices)	4. Biogeographic region Eastern English Channel

5. Features proposed for designation within Offshore Overfalls ¹

Feature type	Feature name	REC EUNIS Level 4 habitats (where surveyed)	Area / No. of records ²
Broad-scale habitats	A5.1 subtidal coarse sediments	A4.81 HE circalittoral rock and thin coarse sediments	5.94 km ²
	A5.2 subtidal sand	A4.92 ME rock and thin sandy sediment	38.83 km ²
		A4D.92 ME deep circalittoral rock and thin sands	
		A5.25 circalittoral fine sand	
		A5.26 circalittoral muddy sand	
		A5.27 deep circalittoral sand	
	A5.4 subtidal mixed sediments	A3.94 ME infralittoral rock and thin mixed sediments	548.74 km ²
		A4.84 HE circalittoral rock and thin mixed sediments	
		A4.94 ME circalittoral rock and thin mixed sediments	
		A4D.84 HE deep circalittoral rock and thin mixed sediments	
A4D.94 ME deep circalittoral rock and thin mixed sediments			
A5.43 infralittoral mixed sediments			
A5.44 circalittoral mixed sediments			
Habitat FOCI	Rossworm (<i>S. spinulosa</i>) reef		1,252.83m ²
	Subtidal sands and gravels		438.94km ²
Species FOCI High mobility	Undulate Ray (<i>Raja undulata</i>)†		n/a
Geology	English Channel outburst flood features		

† No spatial data are held for this species, but anecdotal evidence has been provided by local stakeholders

6. Features within Offshore Overfalls not proposed for designation ³

Feature type	Feature name	Comments
Habitat FOCI	Native oyster beds	Uncertain
	Sheltered muddy gravels	Uncertain
Species FOCI Low mobility	Native Oyster (<i>Ostrea edulis</i>)	Uncertain

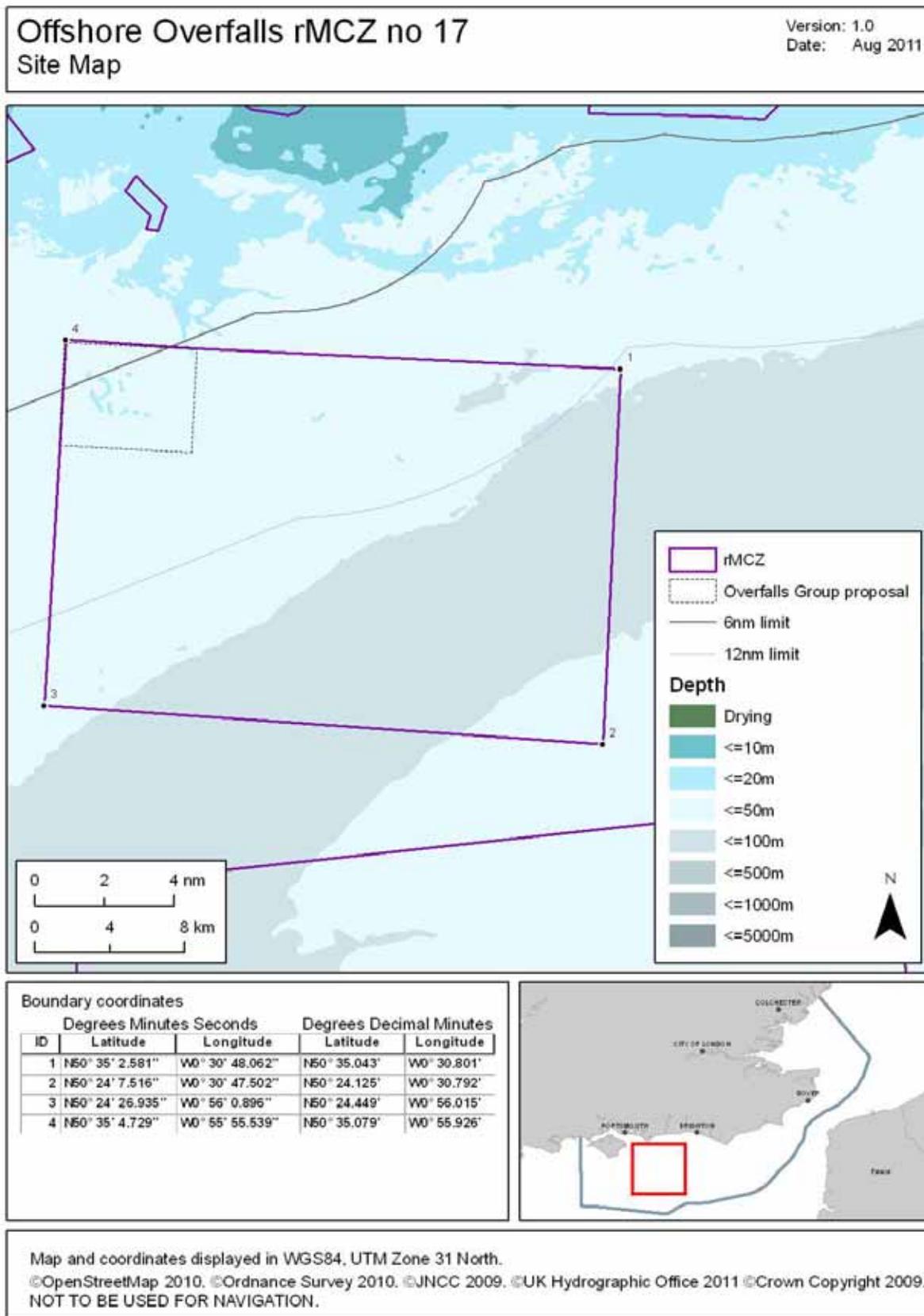
¹ Sources of information relating to these features are listed in Section 13.

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.

³ Features may occur in both tables (sections 5 & 6) if the rMCZ overlaps with an existing MPA where the features are protected.

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7. Map of site



8. Site summary

The main feature of this site is the 'Overfalls', an area in the north-west corner of the site lying across the 6 nm line, consisting of mixed sediments, sands and gravels distinct from the surrounding sandstone and chalk rock habitats and characterised by unusual morphological features such as sandwaves, 'mega-ripples' and large relic glacial deposits forming a series of large bank features in an area of high tidal currents. This has produced an ecologically important area for various fish species, particularly elasmobranchs such as Undulate Ray (*Raja undulata*). The actual Overfalls area was suggested as a potential site for an MCZ early on in the process and arose as a result of the Overfalls Project, a multi-sector group set up to manage activities in the area. During the Balanced Seas project, attempts to meet shortfall ENG habitat targets identified the area to the south and east of the Overfalls as a high priority, both for having high biodiversity and contributing a substantial area of necessary habitats, and the site was progressively extended to incorporate this. In the centre of the site the seabed depth drops significantly where it overlaps the Northern Palaeovalley, geomorphological remains of the ancient river valley that once flowed through what is now the English Channel and evidence of the English Channel Outburst Flood feature. The rMCZ straddles both the 6nm and 12 nm lines, with over half lying in offshore waters.

Activity restrictions and management of this rMCZ have been discussed separately for the Overfalls area itself and the larger offshore area. The Overfalls Group, a multi-sector group set up in 2004 to address management issues for the Overfalls area is highly supportive of an MCZ in this inshore part of the site, and has developed a draft Voluntary Code of Conduct to initiate management discussions. The restriction would be on benthic trawling. For the rest of the site, the draft Conservation Objectives suggest that this should also be the case but this is strongly opposed by the various UK and non-UK fleets that operate here.

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 lies approximately 18km east of the southern part of the Isle of Wight at about 1-35m depth. The bedrock geology of this part of the Outer Eastern Solent is underlain by Lower Cretaceous sands, silts and clays, with Upper Cretaceous chalk underlying the southern part of the Overfalls area (Evans, 2005).

According to UKSeaMap/MESH data (JNCC 2011 v.7), the site is made up of subtidal coarse sediments (A5.1), sand (A5.2) and mixed sediments (A5.4) (see Broad-scale Habitats map). The mixed sediment areas represent a uniform habitat across the area and represent a largely immobile gravelly sand or sandy gravel sheet (Evans 2005). However, the 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 seabed⁴. Finer-scale EUNIS Level 4 data from the MALSF English Channel Synthesis Regional Environmental Characterisation data (REC, James *et al.* 2011), shows that the seabed is better characterised as moderate or high energy rock types overlain with a thin veneer of mixed, coarse or sandy sediments, interspersed with smaller patches of deeper fine sand, muddy sand or mixed sediments (see REC EUNIS level 4 map). The thickness of the sediment over the underlying bedrock is variable but Evans (2005) suggests that it is over 25cm thick across much of the area. Overlaid on this more stable gravelly sediment veneer are transient sandy patches and ribbons which may move across

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

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the mixed sediment areas under tidal or wave driven forces (Tingley et al, 2006.) These mobile sandy sediments are reasonably rare to the East of the Isle of Wight.

The site takes its name from the sand and gravel bank features called ‘the Overfalls’, situated in the northwest corner of the rMCZ and is now the focus of a marine spatial planning project involving local stakeholders. Baseline benthic surveys for aggregate dredging license applications have provided considerable information on the geology, geomorphology and benthos of the Overfalls themselves, but less is known about the surrounding area captured in the rMCZ. Evans (2005) describes the bathymetry of the Overfalls area as dominated by a series of characteristic North-South trending ridges with snaking crest lines (see Figure 1).

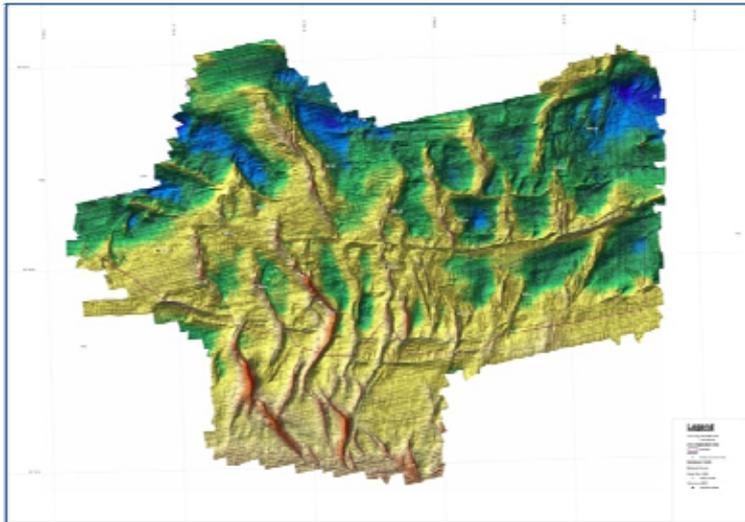


Figure 1. Bathymetry data showing the north-south and east-west ridges (Evans 2005)

In the south, the ridges have crests with a minimum height of 17m whilst for the ridges further to the north this increases to about 22m (Tingley et al, 2006). Using geological cores, the ridge features have been found to be composed of gravely sands or sandy gravels and likely to be relic deposits and not mobile (Evans, 2005). Survey data have shown that superimposed on top of these main ridge features are smaller, medium scale dunes composed of more mobile sandy

sediments (Evans, 2005) (see Figure 2).



Figure 2. Marine habitats found in the Overfalls (Evans 2005)

In between these main ridge features, the seabed is generally smoother with less variation in bathymetry and is composed of areas of flat coarse sediments and areas of mobile sandy bed forms. Across the southernmost part of the Overfalls area, chalk bedrock also appears to outcrop at the seabed

with extensive chalk scarps in this area, these being generally no more than a metre high. Aggregate surveys of the South East Nab within the Overfalls also confirm the presence of exposed chalk bedrock boulders with no sediment veneer in the south west of the area (Hanson Aggregates, 2002).

Within the area influenced (hydrodynamically) by the Overfalls ridges, there are two forms of faunal community: a reduced gravel fauna exhibiting a lower diversity than the fauna associated with the more stable gravel areas, including a reduction in erect or encrusting species, representing the effects of sand scour and occasional inundation; and a low diversity fauna typified by a relatively few, highly mobile species typical of offshore mobile medium to coarse, well sorted sandy sediments, but including some apparently important components of the Overfalls ecosystem such as sandeels and shrimp species.

The seabed to the east, west and north of the Overfalls ridges (and outside of their area of influence) is characterised by a complex of diverse fauna typical of the stable gravel sediments of much of the region. Small-scale heterogeneity is evident in both the nature of the gravel sediments and the associated benthic fauna. Superimposed upon these, are areas of cobbles and boulders which support a variety of erect and encrusting fauna such as bryozoan and hydroid species, thus locally increasing biodiversity. To the east and the north of the Overfalls ridges are a series of further bedrock exposures, thought to be composed of sandstone, and representing both upstanding rock scarps and flatter, exposures.

Macrobenthic surveys recorded 423 species from the North Nab and 394 species from the South East Nab dredging application area. Ross worm (*Sabellaria spinulosa*) were relatively numerous at North Nab and were the most numerous polychaetes at South East (Hanson Aggregates, 2002.) A later survey by EMU Ltd confirmed the presence of *S. spinulosa* at various locations (CEMARE, 2007.) Blue Mussels (*Mytilus edulis*) covered 80% of the sample at the eastern extreme of the S E Nab study area and on the Hooe Bank indicating the possible presence of a mussel bed at this location (Hanson Aggregates, 2002), though Balanced Seas do not hold any records for this habitat in the area. The invasive American slipper limpet, *Crepidula fornicata*, was the most abundant mollusc at North Nab, totalling 858 individuals.

The only survey data held by the Balanced Seas for Undulate Rays is the national contract data produced by CEFAS (Ellis *et al.* 2010 DEFRA MB102 2B), which cannot accurately confirm the presence or absence of this species at a regional scale. Local stakeholders have confirmed the presence of Undulate Rays (*Raja undulata*) at the Overfalls site (Solent Local Group, Nov 2010). Tingley *et al.* (2006) suggest that Undulate rays are likely to be present as they say that elasmobranchs, including the blonde ray (*Raja brachyura*), and Tope (*Galeorhinus galeus*), are primary targets for the area's recreational anglers. These anglers consider that skates and rays undertake localized migrations, moving from deeper water offshore into shallower inshore waters in preparation for spawning which can last throughout spring and summer.

According to the geomorphology data (Natural England; Brooks *et al.* 2009 DEFRA MB102 2A), the site overlaps with part of the English Channel Outburst Flood Feature (see Geology map) which runs along the Solent Paleovalley and is evidence of a megaflood which occurred some 200,000 years ago when a huge glacial lake in the North Sea burst through the Dover Straits Isthmus which contained it, thus separating England from mainland Europe. Sonar evidence of the seabed reveals deeply gouged channels where the floodwaters broke through (Gupta *et al.* 2007). In terms of its regional biodiversity, national contract data show the site covers an area considered to contain the region's top 25% of benthic species richness (Jackson *et al.* 2010 DEFRA MB102 2F). Environment Agency collated grab sample data also show high soft sediment benthic biodiversity in the southwest of the site. Additional commercially and ecologically-important fish and shellfish species in the Overfalls are Bass (*Dicentrarchus labrax*), Cod (*Gadus morhua*), Brown Crab (*Cancer pagurus*) and Sandeels. The Wildlife Trusts have also gathered survey data on species and habitats considered rare and important in the

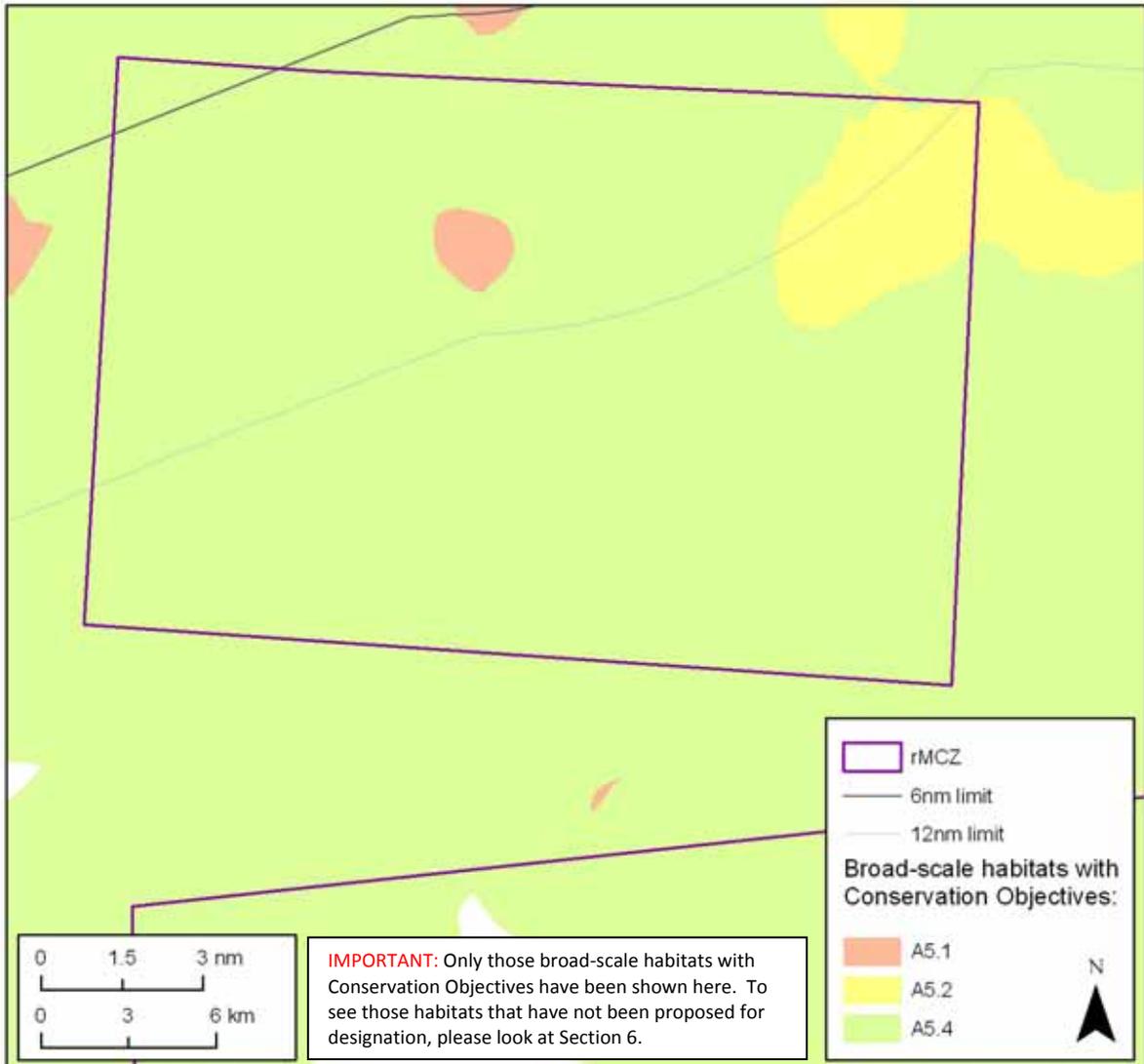
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Southeast. These data show that this site contains sea squirt (*Molgula*) beds and spoon worm (*Maxmuellerii lankesteri*) habitat (see Southeast Features). The Overfalls area itself is one of the Key Inshore Biodiversity Areas in the Balanced Seas Region recommended as an MCZ by the South East England Biodiversity Forum (SEEBF, 2010).

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

Version: 1.0
Date: Aug 2011



Broad-scale habitats with Conservation Objectives:

- A5.1 subtidal coarse sediments
- A5.2 subtidal sand
- A5.4 subtidal mixed sediments



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

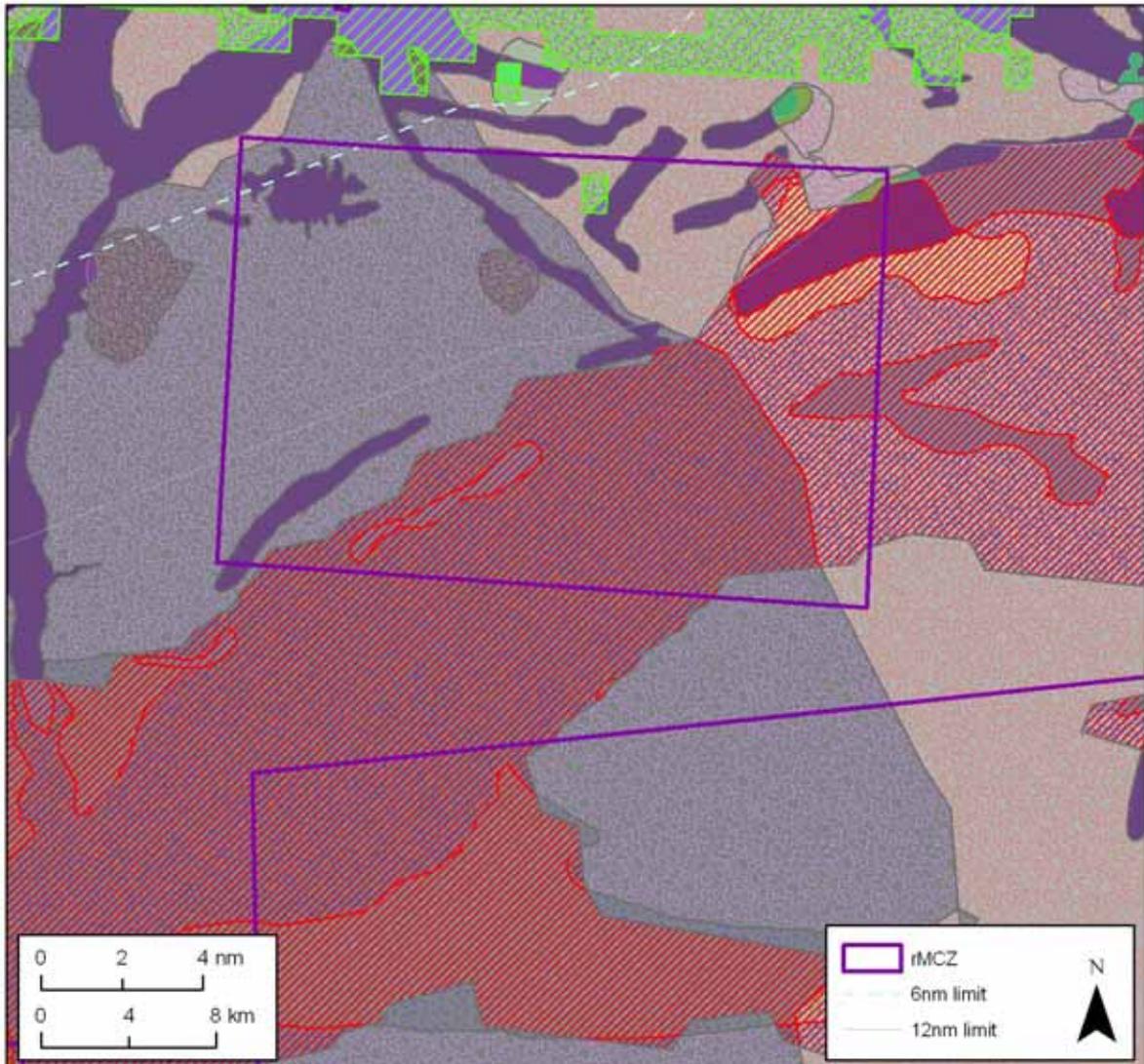
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Broad-scale habitat (reclassified EUNIS Level 4 from REC data)

Version: 1.0
Date: Aug 2011



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

- 42.34 Moderate energy littoral rock and thin mixed sediments
- 44.01 High energy shoreface rock and thin coarse sediments
- 44.04 High energy shoreface rock and thin coarse sediments
- 44.02 Moderate energy rock and thin coarse sediment
- 44.04 Moderate energy shoreface rock and thin mixed sediments
- 44.24 High energy deep shoreface rock and thin coarse sediments
- 44.02 Moderate energy deep shoreface rock and thin coarse
- 44.24 Moderate energy deep shoreface rock and thin mixed sediments
- 42.25 Coastal fine sand
- 42.26 Coastal fine sand
- 42.27 Deep Coastal fine sand
- 42.47 Infaunal coarse sediments
- 42.44 Coastal mixed sediments
- 42.45 Deep coastal mixed sediments



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

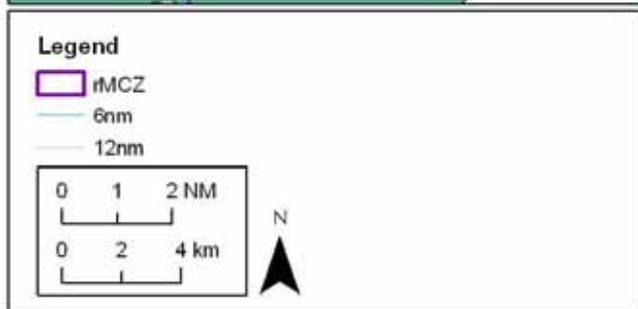
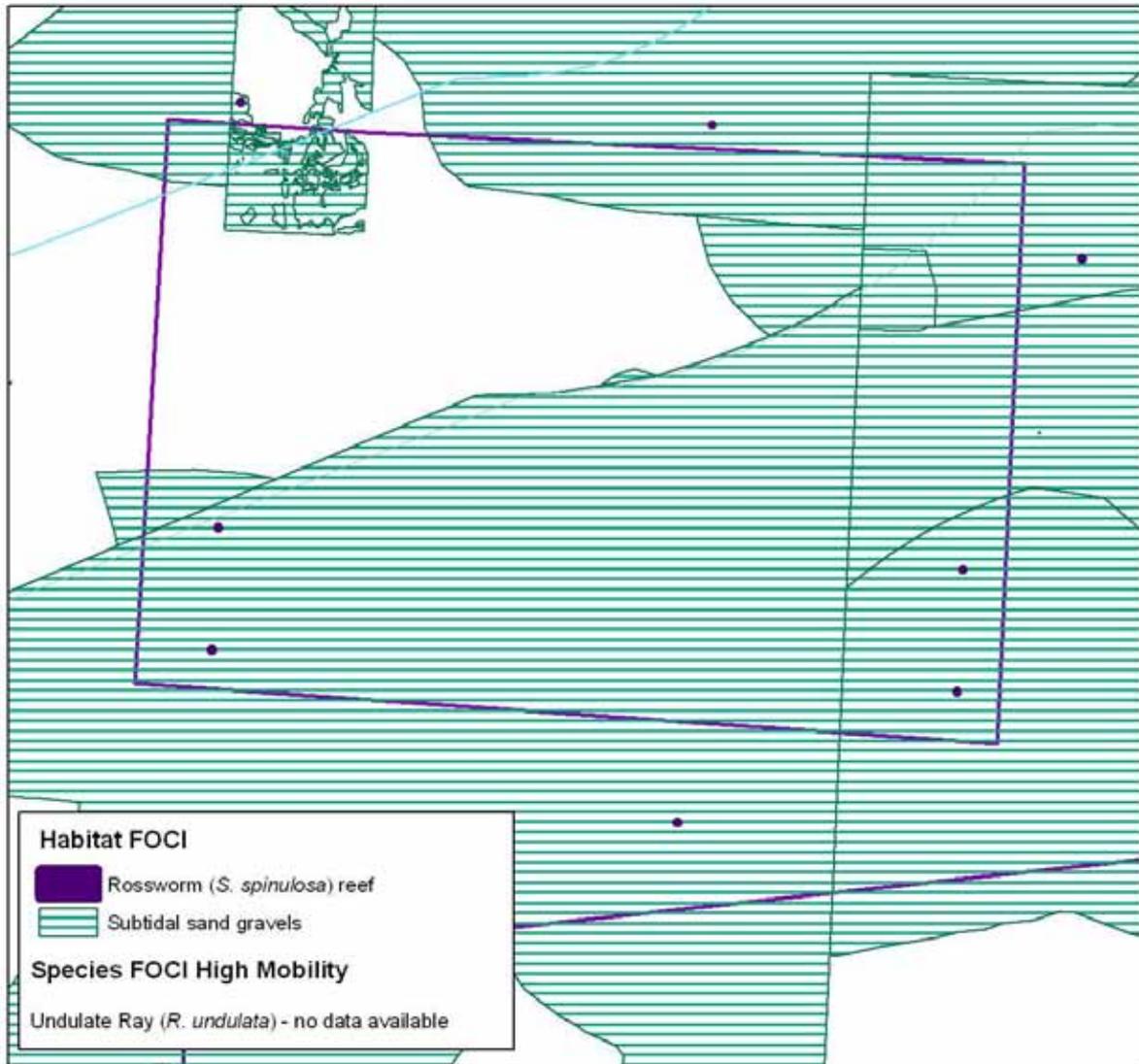
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Habitat and Species FOCI with Conservation Objectives

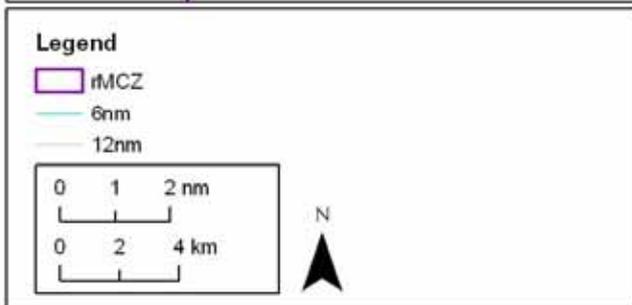
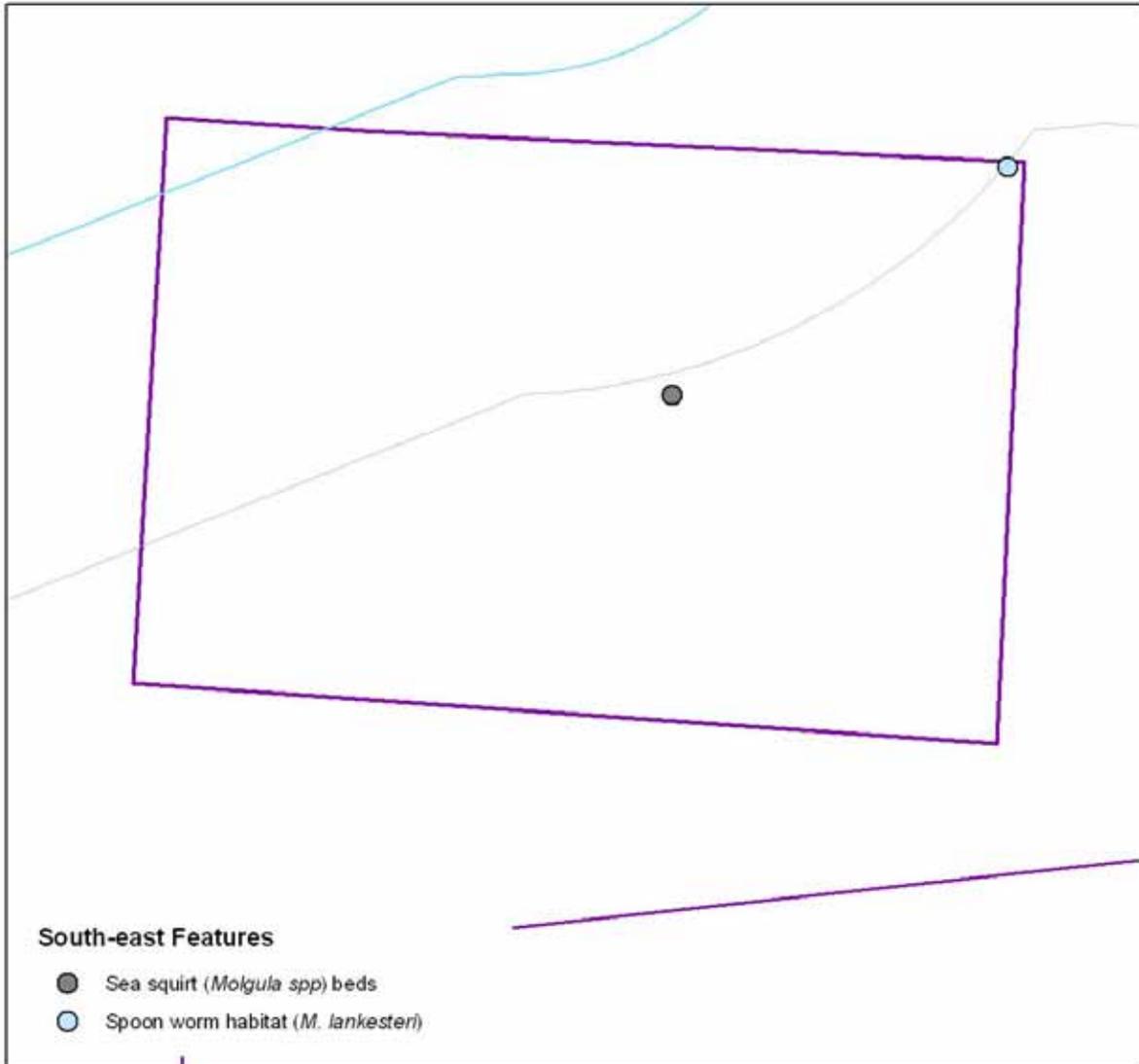


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South-east Features

Version: 1.0
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10. Site boundary

The northwest corner and limit of the northern boundary of the site are concurrent with the original boundaries proposed by the Overfalls Group. The boundaries around the larger offshore part of the rMCZ were set to include an area of higher biodiversity and are determined by geographical coordinates alone.

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 related to 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 the central and eastern English Channel	2011
Rossworm (<i>Sabellaria spinulosa</i>) reef	Survey	Data sourced from: Environment Agency database		01/01/2006
Subtidal sands and gravels	Survey	National contract data, DEFRA MB102 2C		2006-2008
Undulate Ray (<i>Raja undulata</i>)	Survey	National contract data, DEFRA MB102 2B	multiple	Multiple

References (additional information can be found in the Bibliography)

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- BELLEW, S., FRANKLIN, P. TINGLEY, D. DRAKEFORD, B. 2007. *Multiple-Use, Planning and Management : The Overfalls Area Phase II Draft Final report.* CEMARE, Portsmouth.
- ELLIS, J.R., READDY, L., SOUTH, A. 2010 *Accessing and developing the required biophysical datasets and data layers for Marine Protected Areas network planning and wider marine spatial planning purposes. Report No 15: Task 2B Distribution of highly mobile species.(Task 2B) DEFRA. London*
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- GUPTA, S., COLLIER' J. S. PALMER-FELGATE, A. & POTTER, G. (2007), Catastrophic Flooding Origin of Shelf Valley Systems in the English Channel. *Nature* **448**: 342-345.
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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 (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.
- TINGLEY, D., BELLEW, S. FRANKLIN, P. DRAKEFORD, B. HIMES, A. & MARCHANT, G. 2006. *Multiple-Use, Planning and Management : The Overfalls Area Phase I (MAL0012) Final report.* CEMARE, Portsmouth.

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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. Wildlife sectors supported the large extension to the previous areas, but many sectors did not due to the impact on fisheries. The existence of the Overfalls Group, a multi-sectoral group set up in 2004 to address management issues for the Overfalls area in the north-west corner of this rMCZ is highly supportive of an MCZ in this part of the site, and provides a key stakeholder forum for taking discussions forward.

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 Overfalls rMCZ 17
Yachting	RYA	Need to consider whether it should be reduced to original Overfalls site in NW corner.
Sea Angling		Again RSA would recommend the CO should be maintain.
Fisheries	Local Fisheries Representatives	No support for this area. Inconsistencies in CO. Lots of support for original Overfalls Group site.
Fishing - FPO, beam trawling		Good industry support for original site as proposed by "Overfalls Action Group" (original 17). No support for enlarged area.
Birds	RSPB	Support larger site as this captures areas of high biodiversity. Reducing site to original relatively small Overfalls site would gain fisheries support but would not meet ENG targets and misses out areas of high biodiversity.
Wildlife Trusts	Hampshire Wildlife Trust	I support this full site and the CO of recovery for the BSH.
Marine Ecology	Seasearch	Strongly support this site which covers a diversity of habitat types including rock with sediment veneer, in addition to the Overfalls in the original site.
Marine Wildlife	Marine Conservation Society	<u>Support site.</u> Recover from all fishing activities that is towed on the bottom.
French fishing sector	CRPMEM Nord - Pas de Calais / Picardie	The new boundaries are very damaging for the French fleet. The species caught have high added value (cod, bass, sea bream, cuttle fish and squid). Several trawlers from Boulogne-sur-Mer (<25) come to fish within this site, mainly during the winter. The first proposition (17.1) was the best (<5 vessels within it). My sector can't accept this area. We can accept the initial proposition, which concern the Northwest of the area. Combined to the pSAC, the 14 and 21 boundaries, my sector won't survive.

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

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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) process⁵ and then sense-checked at the national level⁶. Where a RECOVER objective is noted, the associated activity causing the pressure is indicated. In some cases, 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

Feature	Draft CO	Activity exerting pressure	IFCA/MMO/EA/NE Comments	Stakeholder comments on draft COs and potential management measures
A5.1 Subtidal coarse sediment	RECOVER	Fishing - benthic trawling (bottom gear)	Within 6nm would be an Prohibition Order I enforced by IFCA, or code of conduct similar to that developed by Overfalls Group	LG (July 2011) felt that for the area surrounding the Overfalls feature the mobile BSHs should be changed to MAINTAIN due to the high tidal energy of the area which means that sediments are less impacted by fishing activities and recover quickly.
A5.2 Subtidal Sand	RECOVER	Fishing - benthic trawling (bottom gear)		
A5.4 Subtidal mixed sediments	RECOVER	Fishing - benthic trawling (bottom gear)		
Rossworm (<i>Sabellaria spinulosa</i>) reef	RECOVER	Fishing - benthic trawling (bottom gear)		
Subtidal sands and gravels	RECOVER	Fishing - benthic trawling (bottom gear)	From 6-12 nm, would be Prohibition Order and CFP agreement	Relating to A5.4: Activity levels used in the VA came under question from the LG fishing industry representatives and they would like to review the figures used and a re-assessment completed if necessary.
	MAINTAIN	Extraction - sand & gravel	Beyond 12nm would be CFP alone RSG: IFCA further noted that within 6nm the code of conduct developed by the Overfalls Group would be their preferred mechanism rather than the PO, but felt that management should be considered as a whole across the site.	RSG: Fishing industry only supports the management of the actual Overfalls feature itself in the North West corner of the site. At the LG (July 2011) the Overfalls Group stated that they obtained a moratorium on dredging by the Crown Estate for 21 years within the specific Overfalls area. RSG aggregate sector clarified that there is currently no activity underway in the site only historic application areas which have been relinquished. They feel this pressure should be removed in light of this information.
Undulate Ray (<i>Raja undulata</i>)	MAINTAIN			LG RSA representatives have seen vessels using static longline gear in the

⁵ The process of establishing conservation objectives is outlined in the [Conservation Objectives Guidance](#) (JNCC /NE 2011)

⁶ VA results were standardised across all four regional projects but the fisheries activity data is still undergoing assessment.

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Feature	Draft CO	Activity exerting pressure	IFCA/MMO/EA/NE Comments	Stakeholder comments on draft COs and potential management measures
				area targeting Blonde Rays which would also capture and kill Undulate Rays. Action: Representative to send further information
Eastern English channel outburst flood features	MAINTAIN			

16. Evolution of the site recommendations

The actual Overfalls Area was suggested as a potential site for an MCZ early on in the process and arose as a result of the Overfalls Project, an initiative that brought together a wide range of stakeholders as the “Overfalls Group” to work together to plan and manage activities in the area. The trigger for the Overfalls Project was an application to dredge the Overfalls Area for aggregates which was met by strong objections from both recreational sea angling and commercial fishing interests together with the environmental lobby, reflecting the perceived importance of the site both in terms of its economic, amenity and conservation value, and resulting in the application being dropped. Although the project funding has now ended, the Overfalls Group continues to meet with the aim of carrying their recommendations forward.

The area proposed by the Overfalls Group was subsequently extended southwards to include additional areas of target habitat (subtidal mixed sediments), as well as an area of high soft sediment benthic biodiversity from EA collated grab sample data (Offshore Working Group, November 2010).

Following the incorporation of the MALSF Synthesis of the central and eastern English Channel REC data, some of the broad scale habitats in the Balanced Seas proposed network of dMCZs fell short of the minimum ENG targets and the RSG tasked the Project Team with suggesting suitable additional areas for inclusion. Marxan (the conservation planning decision support tool) was used to suggest sites to meet the targets whilst also capturing areas of high biodiversity, one of which was a separate area close by and to the east of site 17 (RSG 9A, 17.05.2011). The RSG felt that it made practical sense in terms of navigation and management to combine the two sites together, whilst recognising that this might potentially impact the UK, French and Belgian mobile gear and UK static gear sectors. This larger site was submitted for the draft final recommendations (RSG 9A, 17.05.2011).

In its feedback on the Draft Final Recommendations, the SAP said that it would be acceptable to decrease the amount of some of the subtidal broad-scale habitats included in the network if, by doing so, this would (a) improve stakeholder support for individual sites and the network as a whole, and (b) include an area that was still over the minimum targets (they suggested 2% over the minimum target would be acceptable) and where the REC seabed habitat data had been used. The RSG thus discussed the potential for reducing the area of site 17 back to the Draft Final Recommendations boundary which the trawling sector had said it would support (RSG 10, July 2011). However, this suggestion was not supported by the group as a whole and so both the larger and the smaller sites were kept in as two options. At the final RSG meeting, the trawling industry said that it would now not support the smaller option (although still supporting the original even smaller Overfalls Group proposal). The smaller option was therefore dropped from the network (RSG 11, August 2011) since it did not result in greater stakeholder support, leaving the larger current site as the RSG’s final recommendation, noting the objections from the fishing sectors.

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

The following issues are associated with this site:

- A key issue for this site is that it lies within 3 different management regimes: within 6 nm; 6-12 nm; and beyond 12 nm. Different arrangements would be required for each part.
 - A proposed Voluntary Code of Conduct (VCC) has been developed by the Overfalls Group for the northwest corner of the site, which straddles the 6 nm line but is mainly within it. The VCC suggests the following measures:
 - Acceptable activities: anchoring with anchors weighing less than 1 tonne; angling (minimum catch sizes to apply for all fish species in line with the minimum sizes advised by Angling Trust or Sussex ICFA, whichever is the greater); transit of all vessels
 - Unacceptable activities and activities requiring consultation: targeting and removal of undulate rays; removal of habitat or change to habitats other than approved and/or licensed scientific sampling; pelagic and demersal trawling
- Static gear is not addressed in the VCC but the suggestion is that it should be allowed. Static long lining was not been addressed by the Overfalls Group but some RSA representatives have concerns about the impact of this on rays (see table); fishing sector maintains long lining does not occur.
- France has historic fishing rights within 6-12 nm; foreign interests were not consulted in the development of the draft VCC but non-UK fishing access into the area is of concern to some UK stakeholders. Further information would be needed to understand the implications of non-UK fishing in this smaller area within the full site.
 - The eastern and southern parts of the site (i.e. beyond 12 nm) are heavily used by UK, Belgian, Dutch and French trawling, potting and netting sectors. The west of the area is less fished

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.