

Belle Tout to Beachy Head rRA no 9

Marine Conservation Zone: Selection Assessment Document

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|-------------------------------|--|
| 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. |

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|---|--|
| 1. Site name Belle Tout to Beachy Head recommended Reference Area no. 9 | 3. Site surface area 72 ha 0.72 km ² |
| 2. Site centre location ETRS89 N50 44' 9.427" E0 13' 20.780" N50 44.157' E0 13.346' (N.B. WGS 84 UTM 31N coordinates are provided in the map vertices) | 4. Biogeographic region Eastern English Channel |

5. Features identified for specific protection within the Belle Tout to Beachy Head rRA¹

| Feature type | Feature name | Area ² |
|----------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------|
| Broad Scale Habitats | A1.2 Moderate energy intertidal rock | 0.26 km ² |
| Habitat FOCI | Littoral chalk communities | 0.47 km ² |
| | Subtidal chalk | 1,126 m ² |
| | Subtidal sands and gravels | 0.02 km ² |

6. Other features occurring within the Belle Tout to Beachy Head rRA (to be protected)

| Feature type | Feature name | Area ³ |
|----------------------|---|--|
| Broad-scale habitats | A3.1 High energy infralittoral rock | not viable for subtidal broad-scale habitats |
| | A3.2 Moderate energy infralittoral rock | not viable for subtidal broad-scale habitats |
| | A4.2 Moderate energy circalittoral rock | not viable for subtidal broad-scale habitats |
| | A5.2 Subtidal sand | not viable for subtidal broad-scale habitats |
| | A5.4 Subtidal mixed sediments | not viable for subtidal broad-scale habitats |

7. Map of site (see below)

8. Site summary

The site includes an intertidal and small amount of subtidal area of the coastline falling within rMCZ 13.2, running between Birling Gap and Beachy Head Lighthouse. The area captures exceptionally rich and diverse examples of littoral chalk communities, in a relatively inaccessible stretch of coastline. Other features add to the habitat complexity such as subtidal chalk and subtidal sands and gravels and several broad scale habitats as listed above. Littoral chalk communities here are considered by the South East England Biodiversity Forum as one of the richest and most diverse examples in the region. The site is acknowledged as being very narrow and, in considering the previous location of this rRA (which was to the west at Seaford Head) the SAP suggested the RSG should consider a boundary at least 500m in diameter. At this new Beachy Head location, the features of interest hug the coastline very closely and the site boundaries aim to follow their extents appropriately. The more easterly location also has less activity in the intertidal area.

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.

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9. Detailed site description

For further details please see detailed site description for rMCZ 13.2 Beachy Head West

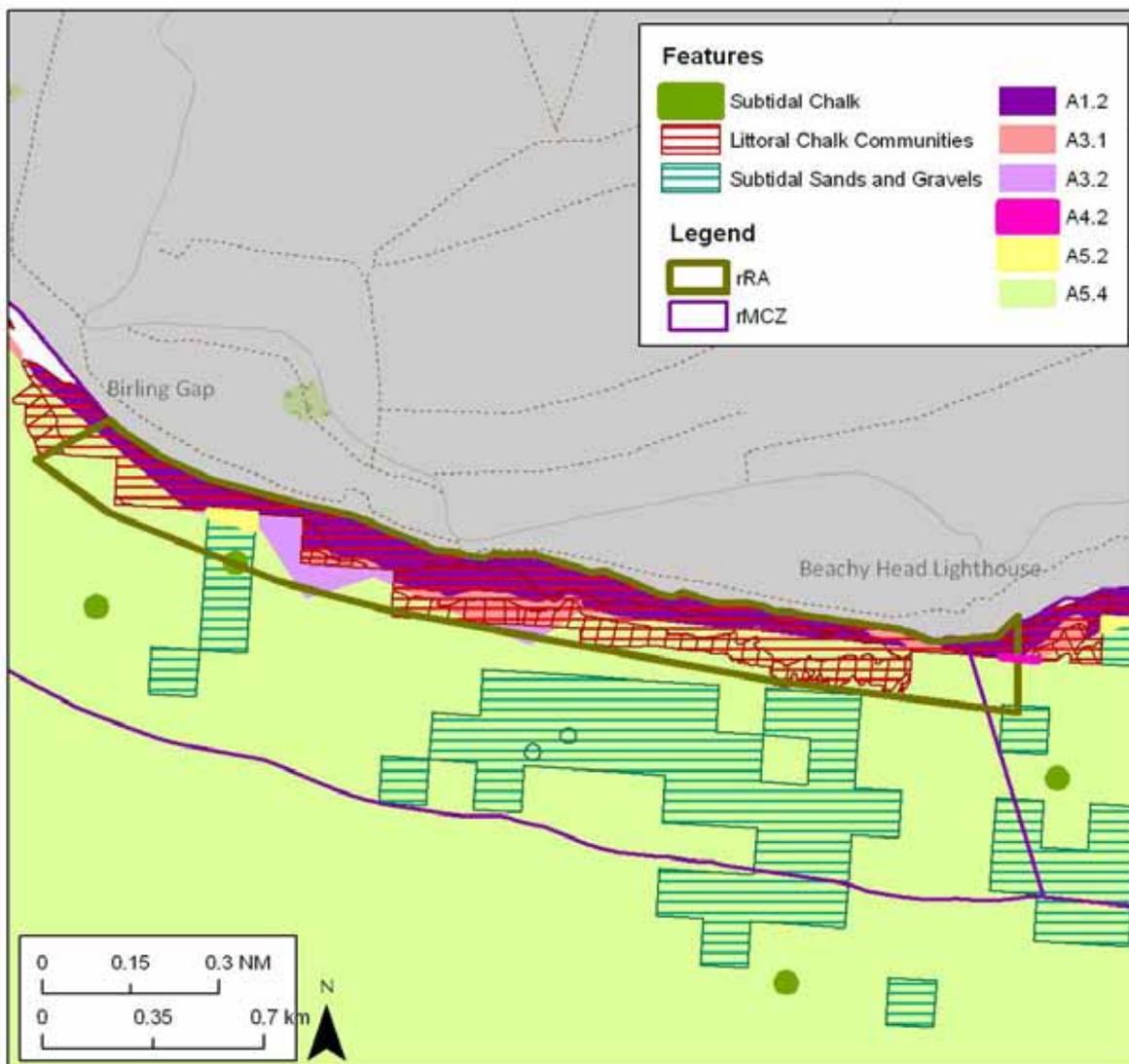
10. Site boundary

The boundary is considered large enough to protect the littoral features that are its focus.

11. Conservation objectives

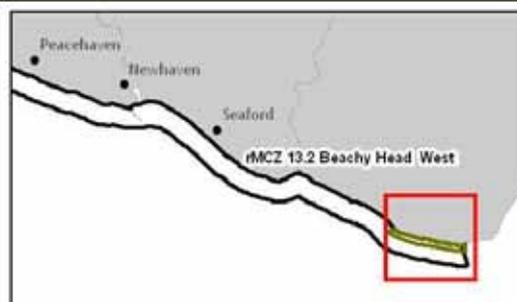
Individual conservation objective forms for each feature can be found in Appendix 1. In selecting the reference areas, stakeholders have identified specific features that merit reference area protection. ALL features in a reference area will, by default, have a Conservation Objective of “RECOVER to Reference Condition”.

Belle Tout to Beachy Head Lighthouse
Recommended Reference Area no 9



Features to be protected within reference area:

- A1.2 Moderate energy intertidal rock
- A3.1 High energy infralittoral rock
- A3.2 Moderate energy infralittoral rock
- A4.2 Moderate energy circalittoral rock
- A5.2 Subtidal sand
- A5.4 Subtidal mixed sediments
- Subtidal chalk
- Subtidal sands and gravels
- Littoral chalk communities



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.
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NOT TO BE USED FOR NAVIGATION.

Belle Tout to Beachy Head rRA no 9

12. Sites to which this site is related

This site falls within Beachy Head West rMCZ 13.2

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 |
| Littoral chalk communities | Survey | National contract data, DEFRA MB102 2C | | 55 | 29/09/2006 |
| Subtidal sands and gravels | Survey | National contract data, DEFRA MB102 2C | | 2 | 27/09/2006 |
| Subtidal chalk | Survey | Marine recorder extract Sept 2010 | | 2 | 1986 |

References

Please refer to the references in the site description of rMCZ 13.2

14. Stakeholder Support for the site

All sectors gave broad support to this site, but several would not accept extensions with regards to SAP advice on viability with the exception of the Wildlife sector. 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 Belle Tout to Beachy Head rRA 9 |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------|---|
| Yachting | RYA | Support. |
| Sea Angling | | Supported by RSA (LG). Recommend as proposal the smaller site. |
| Fisheries | Local Fisheries Representatives | Moderate support with revised boundary. |
| Fishing - FPO, beam trawling | | Local support for intertidal area only. |
| Birds | RSPB | Support site but would prefer boundary to be extended seaward to follow SAP advice + provide better protection for edge of feature. But accept this does not have support so we accept narrower area. |
| Wildlife Trusts | Hampshire Wildlife Trust | I support the site but believe that the seaward boundary be extended in accordance with the SAP advice. |
| Marine Ecology | Seasearch | Strongly support this RA for littoral chalk. It has been surveyed recently and recorded as a rich stretch as well as being less accessible. Suggestion to extend seawards was rejected by fishing interests and this is very disappointing. |
| Marine Wildlife | Marine Conservation Society | <u>Support site.</u> Recover CO for all broadscale habitats from all bottom towed fishing. |
| Heritage and Archaeology | English Heritage | High erosional area with potential I+E falling below cliffs need to have access if [??] and possibly investigate at depths. |

15. Evolution of the site recommendations

An rRA for littoral chalk communities was initially proposed further west around Seaford Head. However, local stakeholders pointed out that the Beachy Head area is much less accessible and has the same features and so would be a more suitable location. The new location was initially drawn with a boundary encompassing a shorter length of coast. The SAP advised enlarging the site seawards but this was not acceptable to many of the sectors at the Local Group meeting in July 2011, although it was supported by the Wildlife sectors. The compromise was to extend the site east and west (no further than Birling Gap on account of the tourism activity at this location) thus capturing more intertidal habitat. They also suggested making it thinner to better reflect the feature captured within it. The Wildlife sector supported this suggestion but highlighted that the site was still not viable ecologically as it did not incorporate any subtidal habitat. The RSG agreed to take the site forward with the boundary revision along the coast only, with the western boundary at the WW2 cable which makes a good marker.

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:

- Fishing industry oppose any seaward extension as it will displace small scale potters and set netters from Newhaven into adjacent trawling ground and upset agreements between fishermen using these two gear types (trawlermen have told static gear fishermen that if their gear is found in the trawling ground it will be towed away).
- RSA activity occurs here but that this sector supports the intertidal site though not support a seawards extension
- Sailing but very little anchoring

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.