

# Upper Fowey and Pont Pill Marine Conservation Zones

## Where are these sites?

The Upper Fowey and Pont Pill MCZs consist of two spatially separate areas. These estuary sites located on the Cornish coast protect a total area of 2 km<sup>2</sup> making it one of the smallest MCZs. The larger area protects the upper tidal reaches of the Fowey estuary extending to Lostwithiel and including the River Lerryn, Penpoll Creek and Bodmin Pill. The smaller area protects Pont Pill, a tributary estuary flowing into the Fowey on the Eastern side near Polruan.

## Why are these sites important?

Upper Fowey and Pont Pill MCZs protect an area that is representative of the estuarine habitats found across the south-west region. The habitats and associated species within the site make an important contribution to the marine protected areas network. The Fowey estuary contains intertidal mud and sediments, as well as saltmarshes and unusual estuarine rocky habitats which create an environment capable of supporting a diverse range of species.



## What do these Marine Conservation Zones protect?

A range of habitats and associated species are present within these MCZs including coastal saltmarshes and saline reedbeds. Saltmarshes are found in the upper sections of intertidal mudflats, in areas sheltered from wave action and are characterised by a range of specialised salt tolerant species. Saline reedbeds are restricted to the very top of the tidal range, typically in areas where there are freshwater inputs which create more brackish conditions. Intertidal mud flats and saltmarshes act as important food and habitat resources for wading birds and wildfowl.

Communities of plants and animals within estuaries are adapted to conditions of low wave energy, strong tides, freshwater inflows, and high amounts of suspended silt within the water column. The majority of estuaries in England tend to be characterised by mud and sand habitats that are typically dominated by communities of bivalves and worms. The Upper Fowey and Pont Pill MCZs also include areas of estuarine rocky habitat. These are important as they contribute to the richness of life within estuaries by providing an alternative habitat which can support different species to the sediment habitat which usually characterise estuarine environments.

Large seaweeds, wracks and kelps tend to dominate rocky areas of shoreline. Amongst these are crustaceans including barnacles and shore crabs, marine molluscs including periwinkles and top shells, and occasionally sponges and sea squirts. Below the low water mark the communities are equally varied, with anemones, sponges, sea mats and sea squirts often found growing on rocky surfaces. There can be considerable differences between communities living in rocky environments at the upper ends of estuaries and those towards the mouth, which more closely resemble those found in open coast rocky shores. Along with the species mentioned, the estuarine rocky habitats provide nursery grounds for commercially important fish species including sea trout and bass.

Features	General management approach
Intertidal coarse sediment	Maintain in favourable condition
Intertidal mud	Maintain in favourable condition
Low energy intertidal rock	Maintain in favourable condition
Coastal saltmarshes and saline reedbeds	Maintain in favourable condition
Estuarine rocky habitats	Maintain in favourable condition
Sheltered muddy gravels	Maintain in favourable condition

## Who will manage Marine Conservation Zones?

Many activities within the marine environment are regulated through marine licences. More information regarding the marine licensing process in relation to MCZs can be found on the MMO website [www.marinemangement.org.uk/licensing/marine.htm](http://www.marinemangement.org.uk/licensing/marine.htm).

Other activities are regulated through different mechanisms. For example fishing activities are managed through European legislation, national statutory instruments, byelaws and self-imposed voluntary agreements. Similar arrangements are in place to manage the range of activities that may impact MCZs including pollution, coastal development and recreation.



Coastal saltmarshes and saline reedbeds © JNCC

Management of sites is currently being prioritised nationally according to the potential or actual adverse impacts of activities on the features designated in relation to fishing activities. This prioritisation will be further refined at a local level taking into account relevant information and will guide regulators to those sites which may need protection before others.

Any management measures that are required for MCZs will be applied on a case-by-case basis. Management measures will be implemented at sites most at risk of damage first, regulating only those activities which have a detrimental impact on the features. In cases where there is a high risk to designated features being damaged emergency measures may be put in place to ensure the protection of vulnerable habitats and species.

## What happens now these sites have been designated?

The site specific information below provides an overview of which activities may be affected by the designation of the MCZ and the current management measures. As with all management measures, they may, of course, be subject to change in the light of new evidence becoming available.

Current activities identified at this site which could be affected include ports and harbour operations. Any future activities undertaken by the ports and harbour authorities will be regulated through the appropriate licensing regimes. MCZ designation will need to be taken into consideration when assessing environmental impacts of marine works as part of the licensing application process.

With regards to fisheries management the site is within the jurisdiction of Cornwall IFCA. All relevant local legacy byelaws will apply to this site, in addition to all relevant national and EU fisheries legislation. For further information visit [www.marinemanagement.org.uk/fisheries/monitoring/regulations\\_bluebook.htm](http://www.marinemanagement.org.uk/fisheries/monitoring/regulations_bluebook.htm)

Current relevant restrictions relating to this site include complex restrictions on netting under existing legacy byelaws. These are being reviewed through the IFCA Byelaw Review process due to report in 2015. Cornwall IFCA is working with other regulators to assess the levels and extent of bait collection within this site. For further information visit [www.cornwall-ifca.gov.uk/](http://www.cornwall-ifca.gov.uk/)

## Where can I find out further information?

An interactive map showing this MCZs and other marine protected areas is available at <http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-5201>

Additional information about this site and other MCZs is available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/protecting-and-sustainably-using-the-marine-environment>

and within Natural England's advice available at <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/category/1499649>



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## Annex: Management

Lead organisation	Activities
<b>Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities (IFCAs)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Fisheries (0-6nm) including commercial fisheries and recreational fishing activities such as sea angling</li></ul> For further information visit <a href="http://www.association-ifca.org.uk">www.association-ifca.org.uk</a>
<b>Marine Management Organisation (MMO)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Fisheries (management) (6-12nm)</li><li>• Fisheries (enforcement) national and EU legislation</li><li>• Licensable activities such as deposit and removal activities below mean high water springs, including subsea cables (up to 12nm), construction (including renewables &lt;100MW, ports and coastal protection), dredging and disposal</li><li>• Harbour Orders and Harbour Empowerment Orders</li><li>• Section 36 and safety zone consents</li><li>• Enforcement of licensable activity and other consents (including deemed marine licences)</li><li>• Development of marine plans integrating the social requirements, economic potential and environmental priorities of marine plan areas</li><li>• Activities requiring a wildlife licence</li></ul> For further information visit <a href="http://www.marinemanagement.org.uk/fisheries">www.marinemanagement.org.uk/fisheries</a> or <a href="http://www.marinemanagement.org.uk/licensing/marine.htm">www.marinemanagement.org.uk/licensing/marine.htm</a>
<b>Environment Agency (EA)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Fisheries management for migratory and fresh water fish</li><li>• Coastal protection and flood management</li><li>• Water quality</li><li>• Permitted discharges from terrestrial sources</li></ul> For further information visit <a href="http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/default.aspx">www.environment-agency.gov.uk/default.aspx</a>
<b>Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Oil and Gas related activities</li><li>• Renewable energy related activities</li></ul> For further information visit <a href="http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-of-energy-climate-change">www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-of-energy-climate-change</a>
<b>Harbour Authorities and local planning authorities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Harbour authorities have management responsibilities for the port and coastal waters within their jurisdiction</li><li>• Local authorities have role to manage, regulate and facilitate activities at the coast. These include management of coastal recreation, tourism, economic regeneration, flood protection, spatial planning and coastal zone and estuary management,</li></ul> For further information contact your local authority or IFCA
<b>Department for Transport (DfT)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Responsible for shipping, harbours, ship pollution and offshore safety</li></ul> For further information visit <a href="http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-transport">www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-transport</a>
<b>Natural England (NE)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Public access</li></ul> For further information visit <a href="http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/">www.naturalengland.org.uk/</a>