

Introduction to the Cromer Shoal Chalk Beds Marine Conservation Zone

Ages 7-11



Cromer Shoal Chalk Beds Marine Conservation Zone



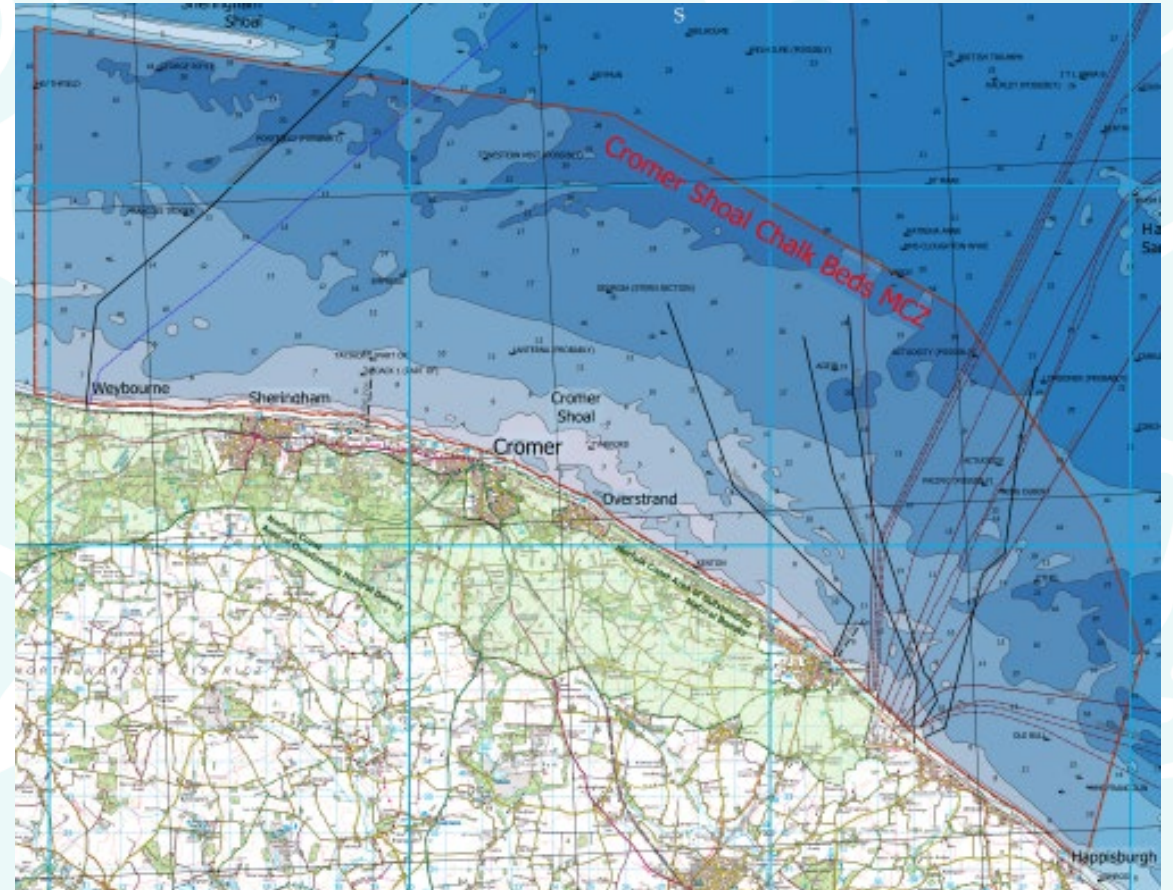
Cromer Shoal Chalk Beds Marine Conservation Zone

A shoal is a **shallow area of sea**.

Can you see the different shades of **blue** on the map?

The pale parts on the map are shallow.

Cromer Shoal is the shallow area of sea near Cromer.



Cromer Shoal Chalk Beds Marine Conservation Zone

Chalk is a **fragile, white rock**.

This refers to the seabed or **sea floor** that is made of chalk.

It is Europe's largest chalk reef.

There is a mixture of chalk, other rocks, peat, clay and sand in the MCZ.



Cromer Shoal Chalk Beds Marine Conservation Zone

Marine: relating to the sea.

Conservation: To keep it from being changed or spoiled by human activity



Cromer Shoal Chalk Beds Marine Conservation Zone

Zone: An area with particular characteristics, purpose or use.

In this case: **the area where marine conservation happens.**



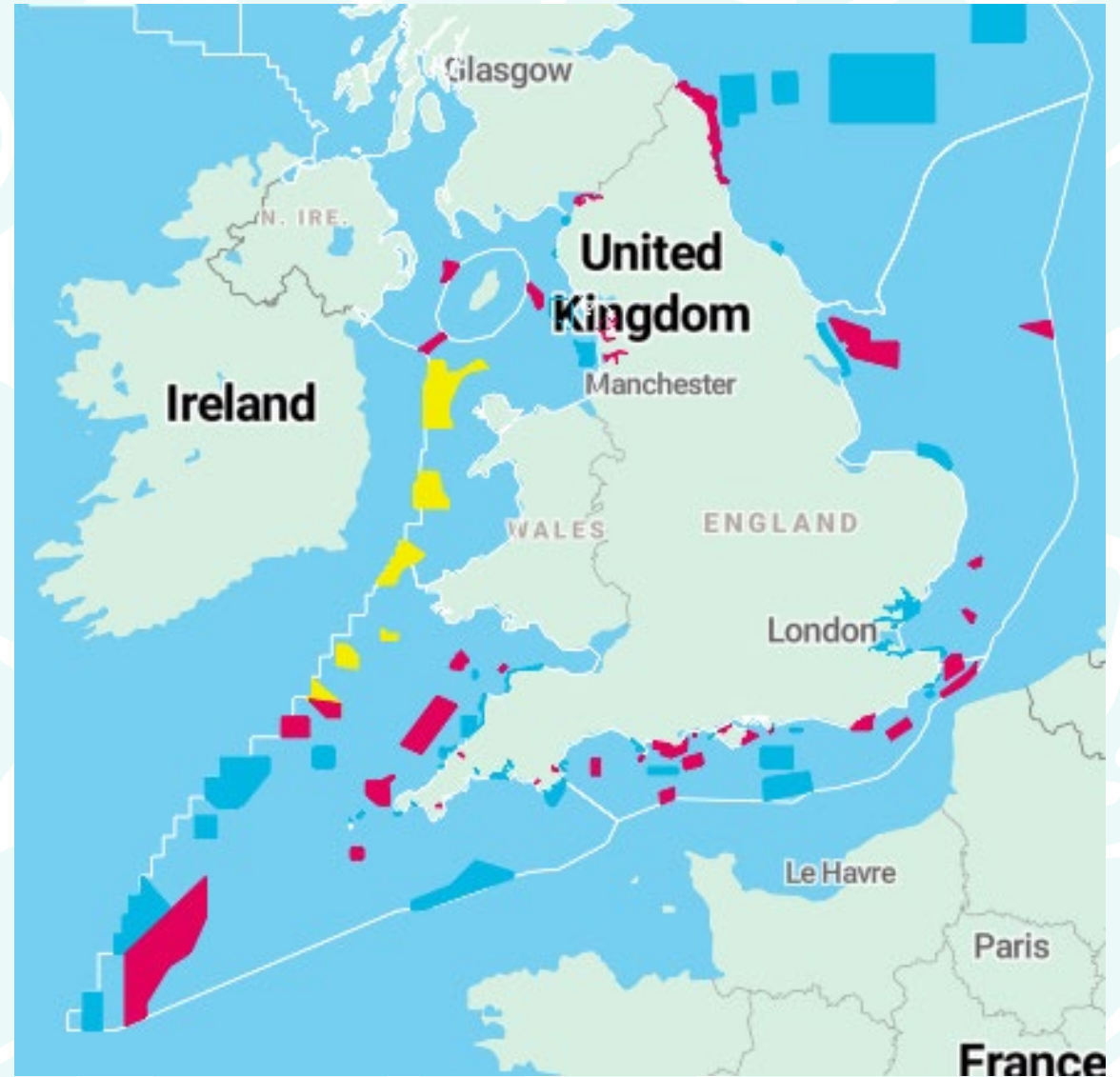


**Let's find out a bit more about the
Cromer Shoal Chalk Beds
Marine Conservation Zone**

Cromer Shoal Chalk Beds Marine Conservation Zone was designated in **2016**.

This map shows the **91** Marine Conservation Zones.

Can you spot the Cromer Shoal Chalk Beds MCZ?



Taken from: <https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/marine-protected-areas/england>

It starts 200m off the beach and extends about 10km out.

It covers over 300km².



Cromer Shoal Chalk Beds Marine Conservation Zone is part of a network of Marine Protected Areas around the coast of the UK.

These are known as the 'Blue Belt'.

All the Norfolk coast has designations to protect it.



Taken from: <https://jncc.gov.uk/our-work/marine-protected-area-mapper/>

The chalk beds have holes, arches and ridges up to 3m high. These provide great places for wildlife to live and hide from predators.



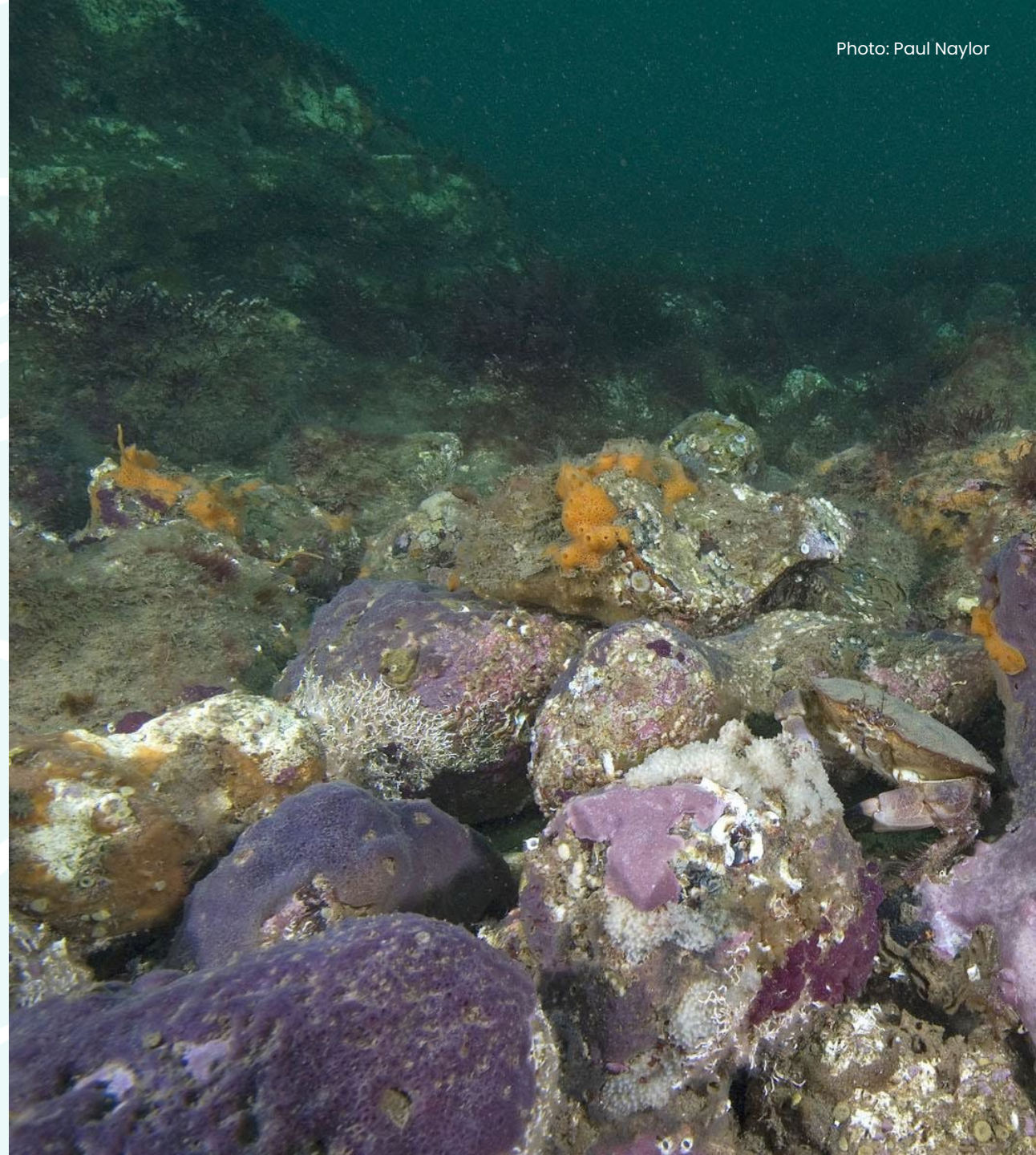
The chalk also provides a surface for marine life such as sponges and seaweeds to attach or burrow into.

These crabs attach pieces of sponge to their shells for camouflage!



In 2011 some divers noticed a purple sponge and with the help of scientists they realised it was new to science! It is the only place in the world where it is known to live.

In 2021, a naming competition was organised that a local schoolgirl won. She named it **Parpal Dumplin** because it is purple and looks a bit like a dumpling!



This video shows lots of the amazing wildlife that lives in the Marine Conservation Zone:



Fishing

Fishing is the main activity in the MCZ but not for fish... for crabs and lobsters!

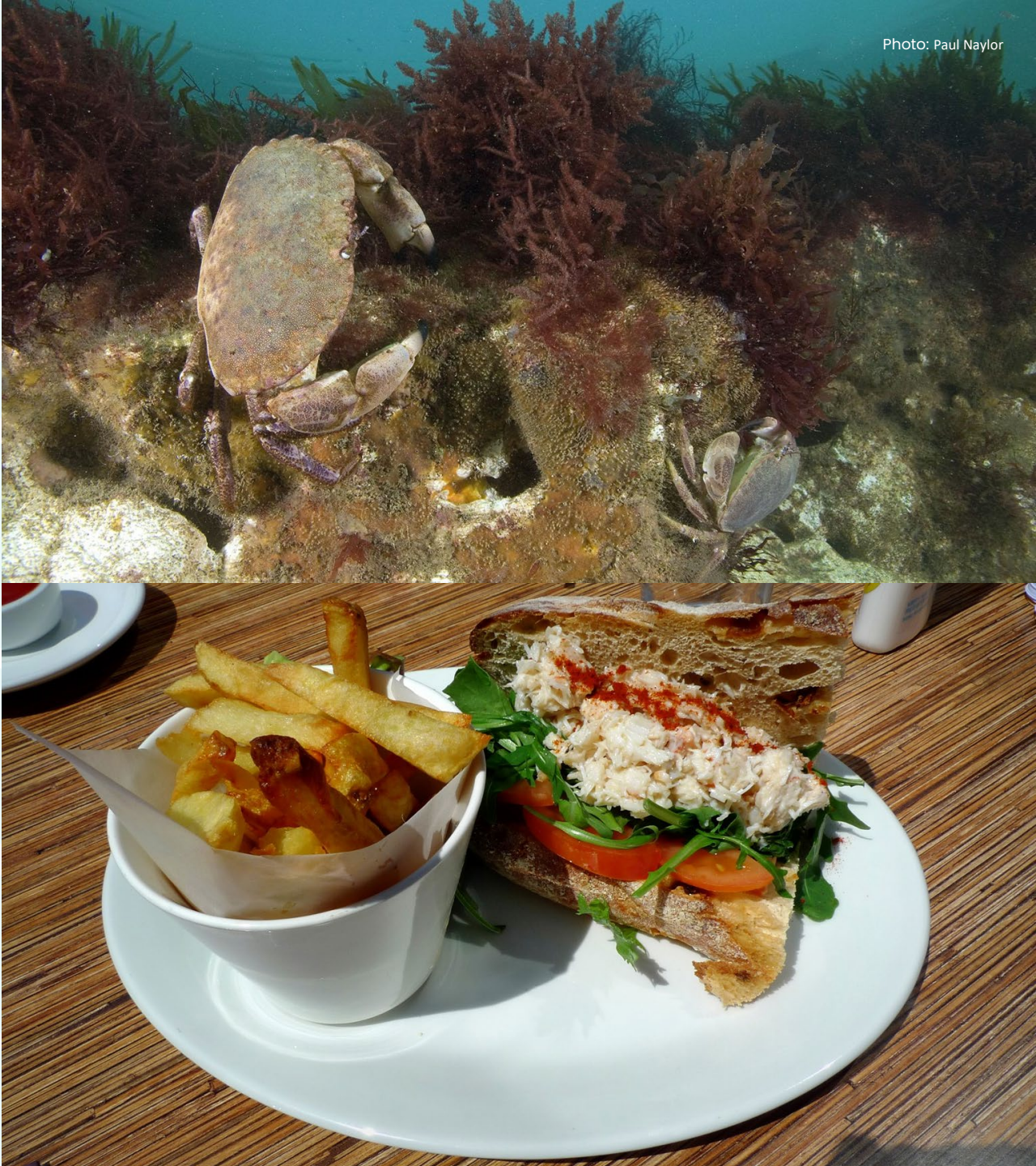
There is a long history of fishing here and it is an important industry for the area.



Crabs

Cromer crabs are famous! The crabs love hiding in the holes in the chalk.

Photo: Paul Naylor



Tourism

Lots of people visit the area on day trips or for their holiday and visit the beach.



Other activities in the area include boating, diving and snorkelling.



What does the Marine Conservation Zone do?

The role of the MCZ is to:

- Maintain it in favourable condition
- Provide social, environmental and economic benefits

It is a 'sustainable use site.' This means that fishing and other activities can continue in a Marine Conservation Zone if they are **sustainable**.

What does sustainable mean?

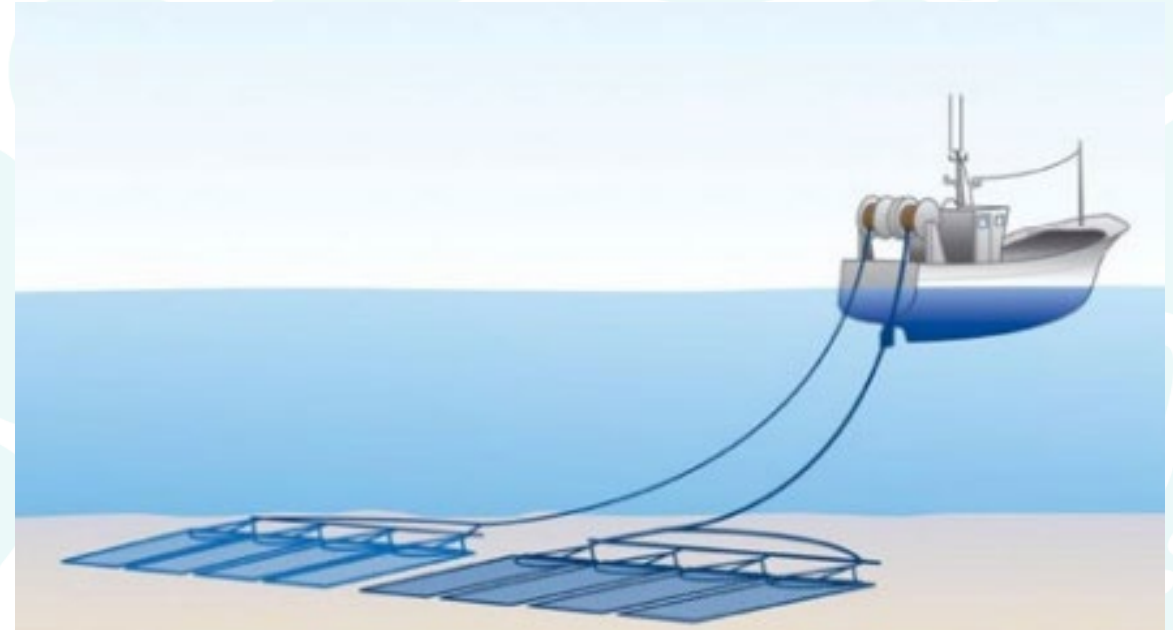
Sustainable = Able to carry on without harming the environment

If humans damage or harm the place and its wildlife, they won't be able to keep fishing, boating and diving here as there wouldn't be crabs and lobsters to catch or wildlife to see.

There are laws and guidance that protect the area, and these may change over time.

Damage from trawling and dredging in the MCZ

Most (93%) of the MCZ is a no-trawl and no-dredge area.



Overfishing

The crabs and lobsters could be at risk from overfishing. Crab numbers are measured to monitor the crab population.

Fishers measure the crabs they catch. Crabs that are too small must be put back. The bigger crabs that are allowed to be caught have lived long enough to lay eggs.

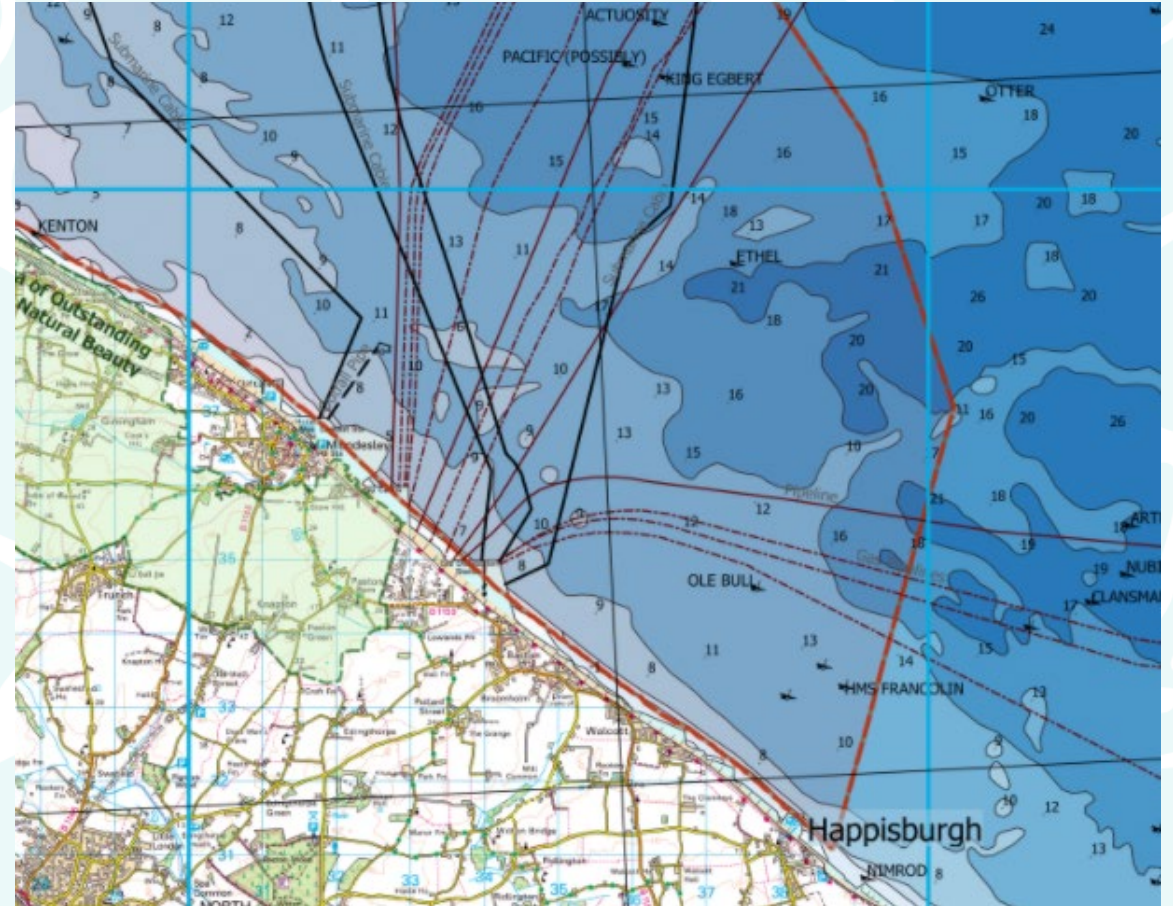


Photo: christaylorphoto.co.uk

Oil, gas and windfarm development

The MCZ designation means extra considerations need to be made before permission is granted for development within the area.

A new wind farm altered its planned cable route to avoid the MCZ.



Beach cleans

Litter is sometimes dropped by visitors or fishing gear can get lost. This can cause a problems for wildlife, particularly with plastics.

People volunteer at beach cleans to collect rubbish to keep it out of the sea.



Summary

- Cromer Shoal Chalk Beds Marine Conservation Zone is a special place.
- The chalk on the seabed provides a special habitat for lots of wildlife.
- Fishing is an important industry in the area.
- Humans need to make sure they do not damage or harm this place and its wildlife.