

7.4 Hartland Point to Tintagel MCZ

Officers' Recommendation

To agree that no management of demersal trawl gear is required in the Hartland Point to Tintagel MCZ

At the B&PSC meeting on 15th August 2019, a decision was made to prohibit the use of dredges over reef and coarse sediment within the Hartland Point to Tintagel MCZ. In 2019 an [MCZ Assessment](#) was undertaken by D&S IFCA Officers on the impact of towed demersal trawl gear on the designated features of the site. Within this assessment, D&S IFCA Officers concluded that there would not be a significant impact on the coarse sediment feature and raised the following points:

- Officers have low confidence in the Natural England habitat map, particularly in the north-western part of the site.
- Local fishers informed D&S IFCA Officers that they fish close to or within the MCZ in the north-western part of the site for skates and rays, which would indicate a sand/coarse sediment habitat rather than rock.
- The moderate to high energy nature (wave/storm influenced) of the site would suggest (from literature reviews) that trawling is unlikely to significantly affect the sediment feature the site.

D&S IFCA Officers submitted this MCZ assessment to Natural England for [informal advice](#). NE disagreed with D&S IFCA's conclusion and suggested further monitoring of the site for demersal trawl gear to be undertaken and to await the results of a habitat survey undertaken by EA in 2019.

In 2022, a [revised MCZ Assessment](#) was undertaken which included the results of the EA survey in 2019 and further evidence on fishing activity from IVMS data. Unfortunately, during the survey no camera footage was obtained in the northern part of the site and only four successful grabs were obtained from the area of uncertainty, two grabs contained sand and two slightly gravelly sand.

The surveys concluded that the site was predominantly comprised of large areas of 'high/medium energy circalittoral rock' amongst 'subtidal coarse sediment', creating thin veneers over low-lying rock, resulting in the relatively poor accuracy of any associated habitat map. It is therefore difficult to show clear boundaries between rock and sediments, and the habitat map is more indicative rather than precise. Figure 1 shows the most up to date map together with vessels' IVMS tracks.

IVMS data indicated that there was no trawling activity in the Hartland Point to Tintagel MCZ during 2019, 2020, and 2021. Where IVMS tracks indicated entry to the MCZ, Officers assessed that the activity was unlikely to be trawling and it is known that some vessels in North Devon switch gear type from trawling to potting and netting.

D&S IFCA again concluded in its reassessment that towed demersal gear (trawling) was not likely to significantly impact the designated features of the site. NE has provided further [Formal Advice](#) on this assessment and agreed with D&S IFCA's conclusions.

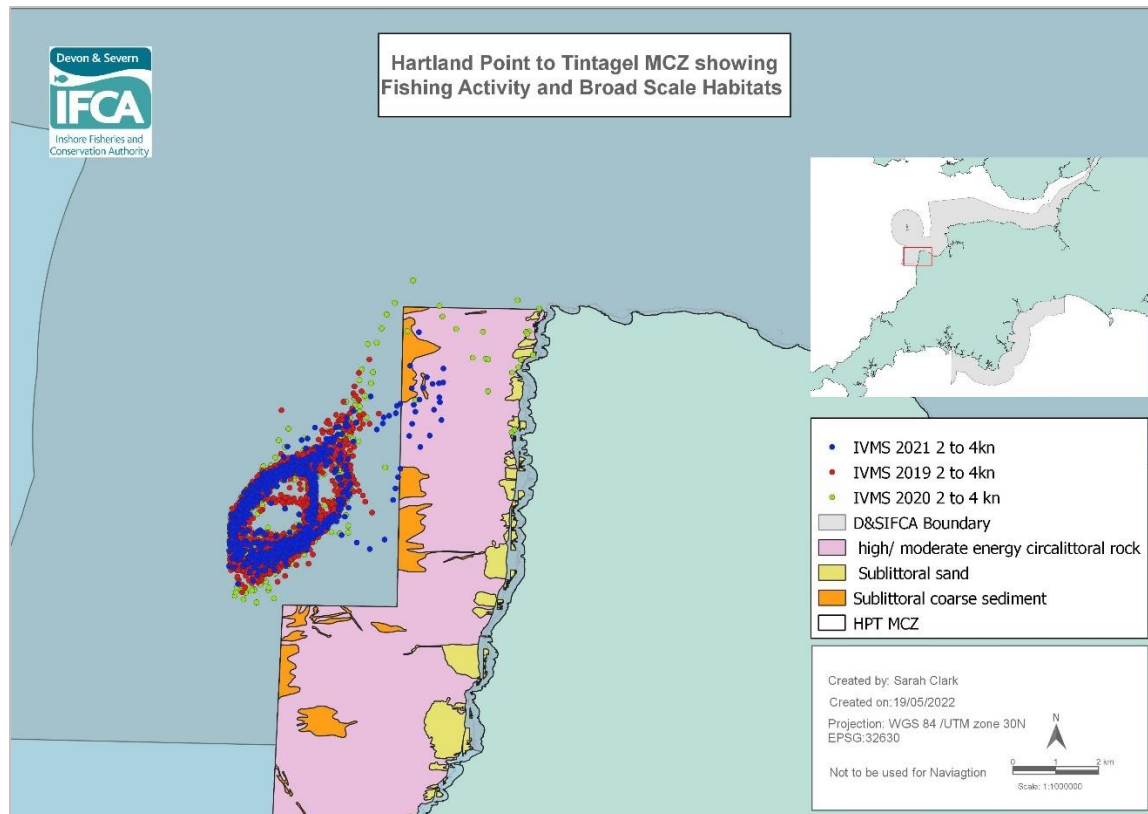


Figure 1 - Hartland Point to Tintagel MCZ showing fishing activity and habitat type

Officers' Comments and Rationale for the Recommendation:

- *D&S IFCA has previously made the decision to allow access to demersal trawling in parts of MPAs, through its Mobile Fishing Permit conditions, where the assessment indicates a significant impact is unlikely.*
- *Demersal towed gear activity is not currently taking place in the site*
- *Uncertainty still exists regarding the distribution of coarse sediment in the site due to the lack of confidence in habitat distribution maps.*
- *D&S IFCA MCZ assessment concluded no significant impact of demersal gear impact on the coarse sediment features of the site.*
- *Cornwall IFCA has taken a risk-based approach to managing activity in their section of the Hartland Point to Tintagel MCZ and has not prohibited demersal fishing gear as the activity is not taking place.*

Background Papers & Hyperlinks

[B&PSC Minutes 15th August 2019](#)

[MCZ Assessment Towed Demersal Trawls 2019](#)

[Natural England's Informal Advice March 2019](#)

[Revised MCZ Assessment 2022](#)

[Natural England's Formal Advice April 2022](#)