

## 7.7 Morte Platform MCZ

### Officers' Recommendation

**To prohibit use of demersal towed fishing gear on the rock feature of the Morte Platform MCZ, as shown in Figure 1.**

Morte Platform MCZ is located in North Devon off the coast at Morteheoe, near Woolacombe (Figure 1). This MCZ has large areas of moderate energy circalittoral rock and a scattering of coarse sediment. D&S IFCA Officers undertook an [MCZ Assessment](#) on the interaction of demersal fishing gear on the features of the site. Currently there is no demersal towed fishing activity in the site. However, D&S IFCA, under Defra's Revised Approach to commercial fishing in MPAs, concluded that if demersal fishing activity was to take place on the circalittoral rock this would significantly impact this feature and the conservation objectives would not be met. [NE's Formal Advice](#) provided agreement with D&S IFCA's conclusion.

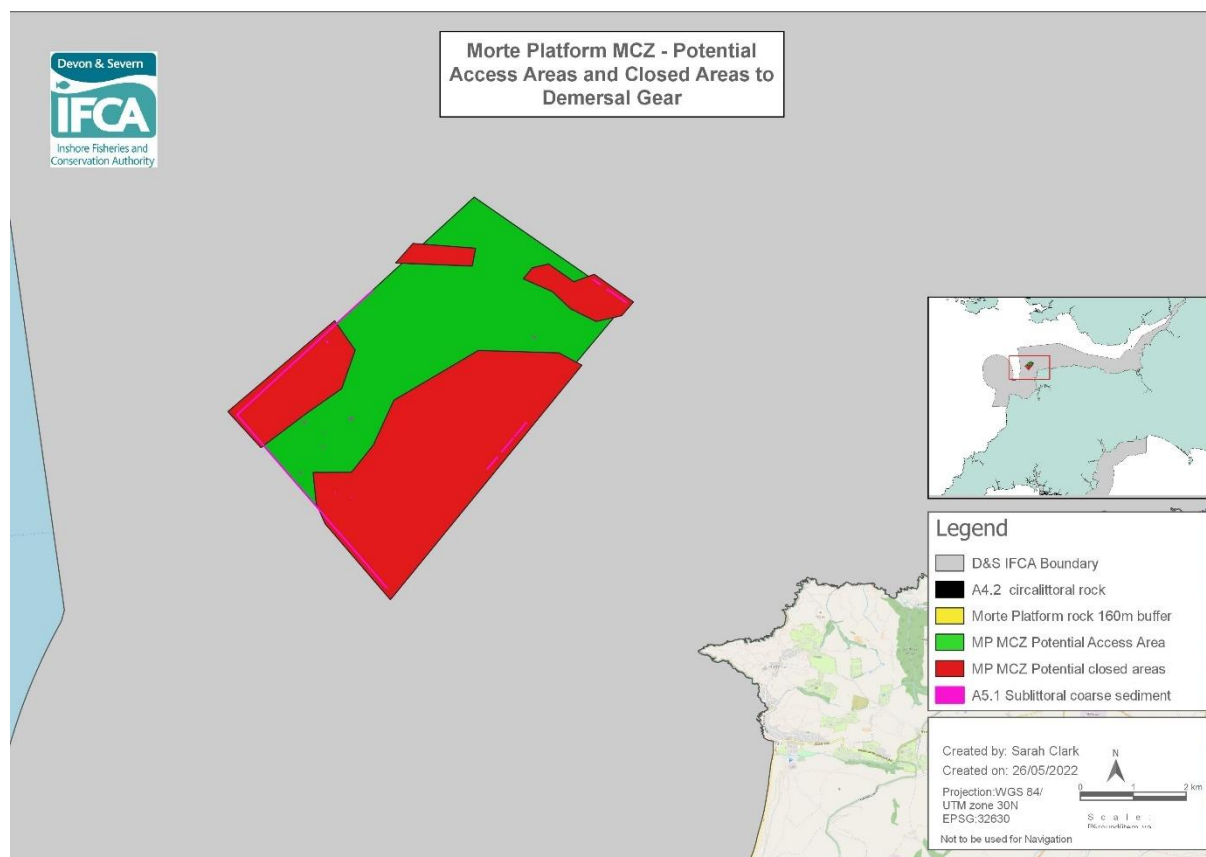


Figure 1 - Morte Platform MCZ showing potential closed areas and access areas

### Officers' Comments and Rationale for Recommendation:

- Under Defra's Revised Approach, the red risk nature of the interaction of demersal towed fishing gear on the sensitive feature of circalittoral rock in the site should be prohibited.***

- *D&S IFCA has prohibited the interaction of demersal towed gear on reef/rock in other sites through its Mobile Fishing Permit Conditions*
- *There is high confidence in the location of the rock feature of the site.*
- *There is currently no scallop dredging and no trawling in the site but there is the potential for this interaction to occur on the rock feature.*

#### Background Papers & Hyperlinks

[MCZ Assessment 2022](#)

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