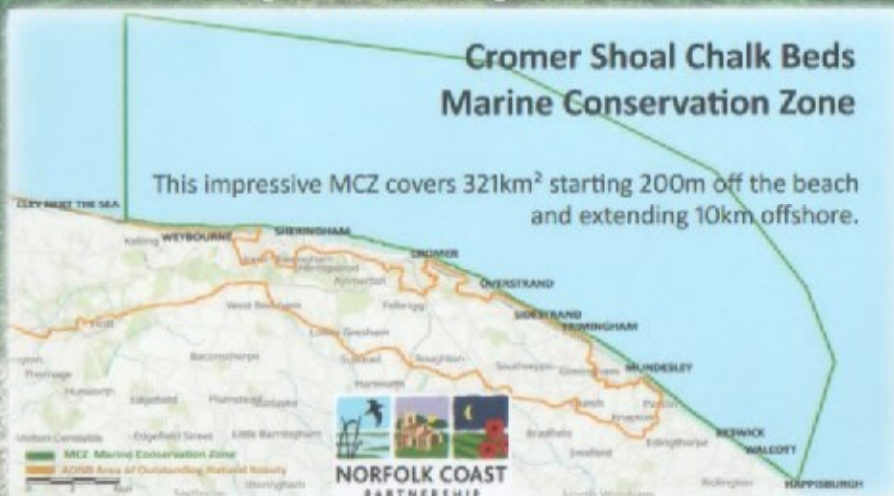


Cromer Shoal Chalk Beds Marine Conservation Zone

Norfolk fishermen have worked the Shoal here for generations and are proud of how they have helped to safeguard the local natural resources. In the 1980's our fishermen pushed for a byelaw prohibiting trawling out to 3 nautical miles (5.5km) between Blakeney and Mundesley. Trawling is a fishing method known to be very destructive to reefs, which provide the most essential crab and lobster habitat. This byelaw is still enforced today by our local regulators the Eastern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority.



In 2016 this remarkable seascape, stretching from Weybourne to Happisburgh, received national recognition and was designated as:



Agents of Change is a project trying to help communities benefit from their local MCZ's. The agreed community vision is: 'Informed and engaged communities working together to support a thriving marine environment that provides sustainable livelihoods.'

Local people identified four key needs

- * A thriving and improved marine environment
- * Informed and engaged locals and children.
- * Informed and educated visitors.
- * A supported and sustainable local fishing economy.

WE NEED YOUR HELP - To get involved or to find out more please contact: Hilary Cox on 07704 971955
hilary_cox22@gmail.com



Protecting the very best underwater chalk reef
in the North Sea - for people and for wildlife

Marine Conservation Zones in English seas are a relatively new type of Marine Protected Area. Management must protect certain species and habitats and also consider the users of the site. This is important to local people, such as fishermen, whose livelihoods depend on a healthy seabed.

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POTTED FACTS: THE EDIBLE CRAB can live for 25-30 years

- ◆ It has 10 legs, the front pair of which have evolved into claws.
- ◆ It is nocturnal and an active predator feeding on whelks, winkles, mussels, cockles, razor clams, oysters, fish and smaller crabs...including its own species.
- ◆ A crab continues to grow throughout its life, periodically shedding its hard shell. The new, initially soft, shell is pumped full of water to expand it prior to hardening.
- ◆ The crab grows about 2cm a year in shell width during its first three years, but its growth rate has slowed to about 2mm a year after a decade or so.
- ◆ Female crabs mate shortly after moulting in summer. They carry eggs - up to three million, depending on crab size - under their abdomens for 6-9 months.
- ◆ Females do not feed when they are carrying eggs and remain hidden in holes dug in the sediment or under rocks - so they are less commonly caught in pots.
- ◆ The minimum landing size for North Norfolk crabs is 115mm carapace width (shell width) which is less than elsewhere in the UK. It is believed these smaller crabs taste sweeter.
- ◆ About 120 tonnes of crab are landed at Cromer every year.



POTTED FACTS: EUROPEAN LOBSTER can live for over 50 years

- ◆ It has five pairs of legs, the front pair of which have evolved into claws, one sharp for cutting, the other broad for crushing.
- ◆ The lobster eats fish, molluscs, other crustaceans, worms and some plants. It also scavenges on dead prey and can be cannibalistic in captivity.
- ◆ It continues to grow throughout its life. Moulting in its lair in crevices and under rocks, it stays hidden for about two weeks until the new shell hardens.
- ◆ The lobster moults 5 or 6 times in the first year, but only once or twice a year when adult. It can take 5-7 years to reach marketable size, having moulted 20-30 times.
- ◆ Average sized females produce around 10,000 eggs, carried internally for 9 - 12 months then externally for 9 - 12 months, attached to "swimmerets" under her tail.
- ◆ The minimum landing size is 87mm carapace length (shell length). Only about 1 in 25,000 lobster eggs survives to become a lobster of this size.
- ◆ Lobsters are dark blue when alive, the shells turn orange after cooking.
- ◆ About 30 tonnes of lobster are landed at Cromer every year.



Beneath the Waves

Cromer Shoal Chalk Beds MCZ protects a beautiful, breathtaking underwater world. Considered amongst the best in Europe, the iconic and extensive subtidal chalk bed was formed over 65 million years ago. This seaweed covered reef stretches over 30km along the coast, it provides a home to crabs and lobsters, and nursery habitats for some of the fish we eat too!

The MCZ also includes large areas of exposed clay, formed millions of years ago by ancient glacial lake beds.

The clay provides a unique underwater habitat and home for countless burrowing sea creatures.

Over 350 animal species and 120 types of seaweed have been recorded in the MCZ.

In 2011 divers discovered a species of purple sponge living on the reef that was new to science!