

Voluntary Code of Conduct

This voluntary Code of Conduct has been developed by Sussex IFCA to support the management of Beachy Head West MCZ and help achieve positive conservation outcomes for the site's sensitive habitats and protected species.

- **Avoid anchoring on rocky habitats or within the Education Conservation Areas. If essential, use lower impact anchoring methods.**
Purpose: To reduce damage to sensitive reef habitats and seabed features.
- **Return seahorses to the sea immediately if accidentally caught.**
- **Record and report sightings or accidental catches (location, species and photograph) to Sussex Biodiversity Records Centre.**
- **Avoid fishing in areas where repeated seahorse bycatch is known to occur.**
Purpose: To improve understanding of seahorse distribution and reduce impacts on this protected species.
- **Return female finfish and shellfish with eggs.**
Purpose: To allow eggs to hatch, supporting future recruitment and maintain healthy fish populations.
- **Follow Sussex IFCA Minimum Size (Fish, Crustacea and Mollusc) Byelaw and any applicable statutory minimum landing sizes.**
Purpose: To protect immature fish and shellfish, enabling them to breed at least once.
- **Use landing nets to lift fish into boats. Wet hands before handling fish, minimise handling time, unhook fish while in the landing net; support fish properly during photographs and return fish quickly where catch and release is practised.**
Purpose: To promote good handling and unhooking practice to minimise damage and improve survivability of released fish.
- **Take photographs in place of retaining trophy fish.**
Purpose: To protect larger and more reproductively important individuals.
- **If retaining fish, dispatch them quickly and humanely.**
Purpose: To promote good fish welfare practice.
- **Supply catch and fishing activity data to Sussex IFCA.**
Purpose: To help us better understand our fisheries and inform management.
- **Return lobsters that have lost one or both claws.**
Purpose: Lobsters are capable of regenerating lost limbs and continuing to contribute to the breeding population.

Hand Gathering (Restrictions & Permitting) Byelaw

You must also comply with the Sussex IFCA Hand Gathering (Restrictions and Permitting) Byelaw, including bag limits, species restrictions and no-take areas.

Further information on Sussex IFCA byelaws, marine protected area management and reporting suspected illegal fishing is available on the Sussex IFCA website



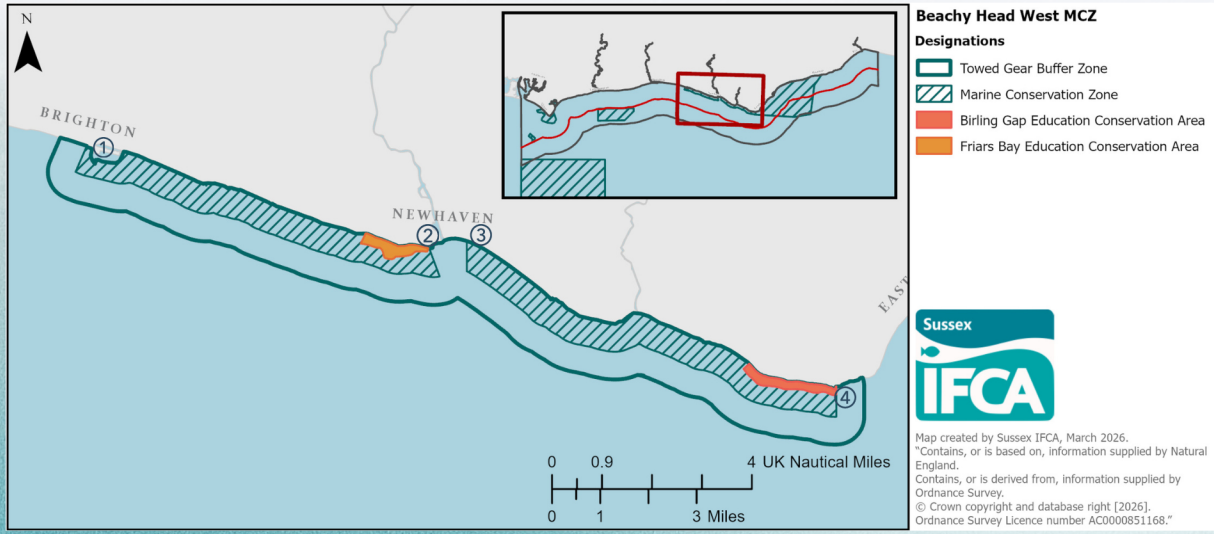
BEACHY HEAD WEST

Marine Conservation Zone

A protected area from Brighton to Beachy Head

Fisheries Management
Measures Summary

Beachy Head West Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ) forms part of the UK's network of Marine Protected Areas. The site extends from the high-water mark to 0.5nm (0.9km) out to sea and stretches from Brighton Marina, eastwards to Beachy Head lighthouse, excluding the Newhaven port area. This site protects one of the best examples of chalk reef habitat in Europe and supports a wide range of marine life, including seahorses, blue mussels and native oysters.



Education Conservation Areas
The Education Conservation Areas (ECAs) are intertidal gathering no-take areas established to support research, education and conservation. Monitoring within these areas helps improve understanding of intertidal habitats and species communities in the absence of intertidal gathering. The ECAs also tie in with the marine sections of the South Downs National Park and the Living Coast UNESCO Biosphere.

MCZ Landward Marks & Co-Ordinates		
1	West side of Brighton Marina	50°48.81'N 000° 06.61'W
2	150m west of Newhaven west arm	50°46.81'N 000° 03.05'E
3	Tide Mills, Seaford Bay	50°46.92'N 000° 04.12'E
4	Beachy Head lighthouse	50°44.11'N 000° 14.49'E

Education Conservation Areas Landward Marks & Co-Ordinates		
Friars Bay ECA	Eastern end of Peacehaven undercliff	50° 47.11'N 000° 01.25'E
	Newhaven west arm car park	50° 46.81'N 000° 03.02'E
Birling Gap ECA	Birling Gap staircase	50° 44.56'N 000° 12.04'E
	Beachy Head lighthouse	50° 44.10'N 000° 14.49'E

Inspection & Enforcement Powers

Sussex IFCA Officers have statutory powers under the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 to board and inspect any vessel and inspect persons who may have been fishing, bait digging or hand gathering.

Fishers and gatherers are expected to cooperate fully with officers carrying out inspections. Failure to comply with a reasonable request made by an authorised officer may constitute an offence under fisheries legislation.

Legal Requirements

Under the Sussex IFCA Marine Protected Areas Byelaw and associated Beachy Head West MCZ schedule, it is prohibited for a person to:

- Remove, harm or destroy blue mussels, seahorses, piddocks or native oysters;
- Inside the ECAs: remove or harm any marine organism through intertidal gathering;
- Outside the ECAs: remove from the shore more than 2 European lobsters, 5 edible crabs, 20 crabs of other species, 1kg mollusc shellfish, 1kg shrimps/ prawns, 1kg marine worms or 2kg seaweed within a single calendar day; **These bag limits are more restrictive than those general limits set under the Sussex IFCA Hand Gathering (Restrictions and Permitting) Byelaw.**
- Remove any of the above species from the shore for commercial purposes;
- Fish with a net from the shore;
- Anchor a fishing line from the shore (rod and line angling is permitted); or
- Use towed gear (e.g. a trawl) from a vessel within the MCZ. Vessels operating towed gear within the surrounding buffer zone (0.5nm) of the Beachy Head West MCZ must use an active vessel information and monitoring system.