

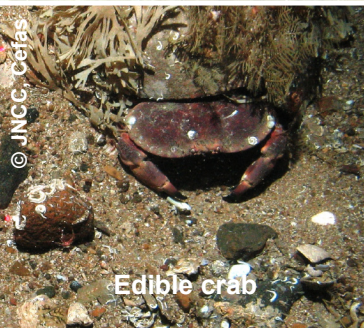
Firth of Forth Banks Complex

Marine Protected Area

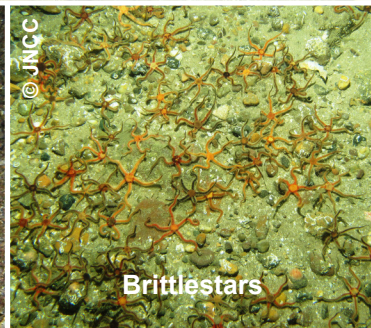
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A rich and productive environment



Edible crab



Brittlestars



Ocean quahog

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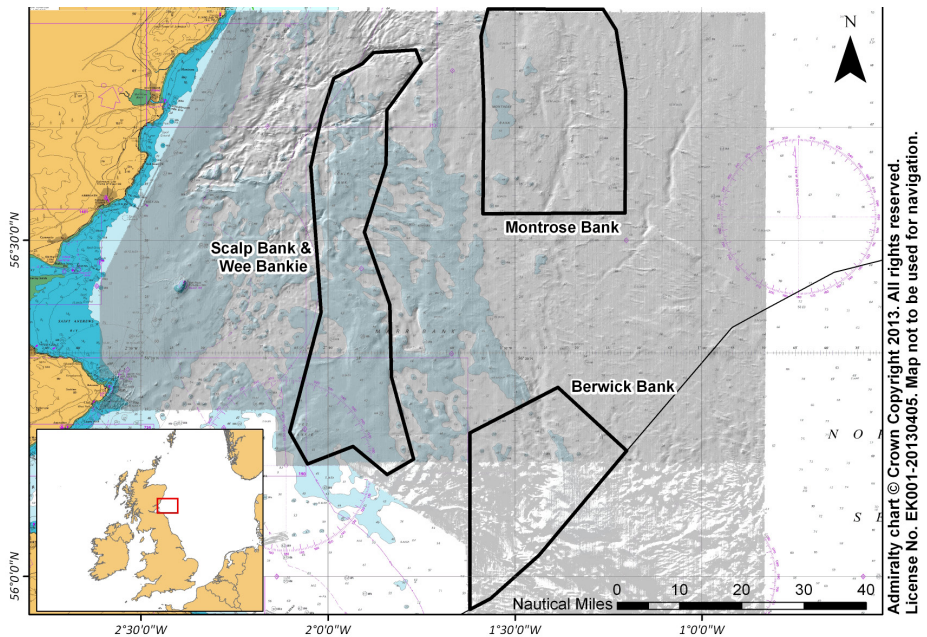
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Firth of Forth Banks Complex

Marine Protected Area (MPA)

The Firth of Forth Banks Complex MPA is located in offshore waters to the east of Scotland, and includes the Berwick, Scalp and Montrose Banks and the Wee Bankie. Strongly influenced by water currents, the mosaic of different types of sands and gravels create a unique mixture of habitats that overlie the underwater banks and mounds within the MPA.

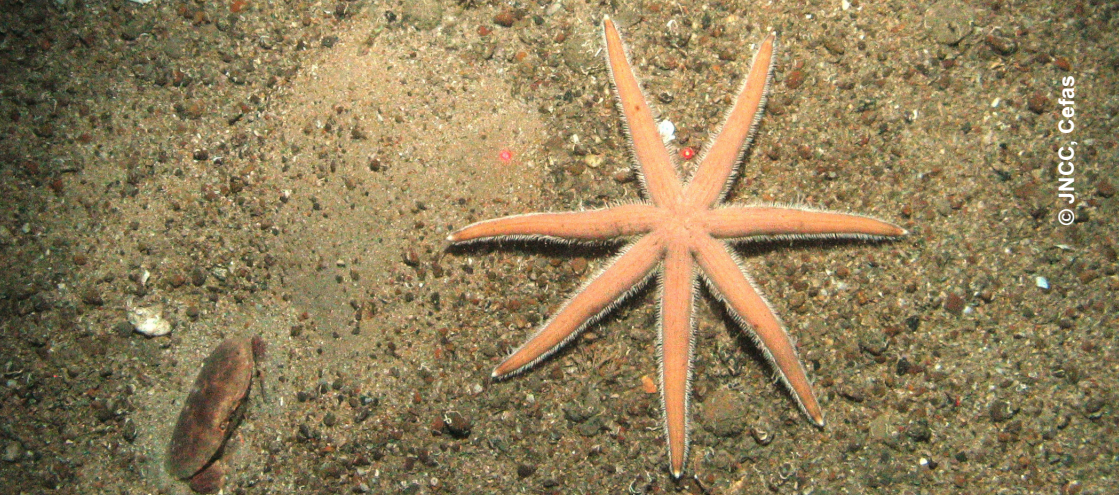
The Wee Bankie includes an area of unusual seabed, formed from underwater glacial ridges deposited during the last Ice Age. This feature is scientifically important for its role in improving our understanding of the history of glaciation around Scotland.



Boundary of the Firth of Forth Banks Complex MPA with seabed relief

Location: 56° 27.294' N 1° 37.301' W

Size: 2,130 km²



Starfish and edible crab looking for their next meal

Protected Features & Conservation Objectives

The aim is to **conserve** the **ocean quahog aggregations, offshore subtidal sands and gravels, and shelf banks and mounds** that are present within the Firth of Forth Banks Complex MPA. The glacial ridges of the Wee Bankie are also conserved.

The Firth of Forth Banks Complex MPA covers a highly productive area as shown by the richness of wildlife found in the region. The sand and gravel banks are considered significant to the health of Scotland's seas, supporting populations of small fish and creating conditions ideal for several types of fish to breed. This source of food attracts many larger types of fish, seabirds, and marine mammals such as seals and dolphins.

The seabed within the MPA is a mosaic of different sands and gravels. Although relatively common around Scotland, the dynamic currents in the Firth of Forth Banks area influence the distribution of the sands and gravels. From coarse gravel to finer-grained sands, the habitats support a variety of animals, including those that live buried in the sand, growing on the gravel and small rocks, and the flatfish, starfish and crabs that roam the surface looking for their next meal. Ocean quahog can be found living buried within the sandier areas. A type of large clam, ocean quahog can live up to 400 years and are one of the longest living animals on Earth.

Further Information

Further information on Nature Conservation MPAs, the wider network and protected areas management is available at

www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/marine/marine-environment/mpanetwork

For Nature Conservation MPA site documents and more information about the fascinating range of marine life found in Scotland's seas, please visit

www.jncc.defra.gov.uk/scottishmpas - for offshore waters

www.snh.gov.uk/mpas - for territorial waters



marine scotland



A sea star and squat lobster roam the surface



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