Carbonate mounds
EUNIS code: A6.75

National Marine Habitat Classification for UK & Ireland code: Not defined

Carbonate mounds are distinct elevations of various shapes, which may be up to 350m high and 2km wide at their base (Weering *et al*, 2003). They occur offshore in water depths of 500-1100m with examples present in the Porcupine Seabight and Rockall Trough (Kenyon *et al,* 2003). Carbonate mounds may have a sediment veneer, typically composed of carbonate sands, muds and silts. The cold-water reef-building corals *Lophelia pertusa* and *Madrepora oculata*, as well as echiuran worms are characteristic fauna of carbonate mounds. Where cold-water corals (such as *Lophelia*) are present on the mound summit, coral debris may form a significant component of the overlying substratum.

There is currently speculation on the origin of carbonate mounds, with possible associations with fault-controlled methane seepage from deep hydrocarbon reservoirs, or gas-hydrate dissociation (Henriet *et al*, 1998) through to the debris from 'cold-water' coral colonies such as *Lophelia*.

See OSPAR Agreement 2008-07 for references