

NORTH WESTERN INSHORE FISHERIES AND CONSERVATION AUTHORITY



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BY EMAIL

Case Reference: Crown Estate Offshore Wind Leasing Feedback 2018.

Dear Rosie Kelly,

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the Potential new offshore wind leasing. The NWIFCA has reviewed the information and has made comments within its remit.

The North Western Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority is the relevant body for the regulation of inshore sea fisheries within its District and has a range of duties including ensuring the sustainable exploitation of sea fisheries resources and protection of the marine environment from sea fishing activities.

NWIFCA makes this response with the best knowledge of Officers. This response focusses on fisheries data and concerns for potential impacts on the fishing industry.

1. Do you have a view on The Crown Estate's reasoning for, and/or the timing of, a potential new leasing process?

No Comment.

2. Do you have any comments on the Characterisation Summary Report? If so, please provide details.

The summary report highlights the main issues for each area as assessed by the characterisation modelling; however, for the NWIFCA the Irish Sea regional document contains more useful information.

3. Do you have any additional information in terms of other constraints, considerations or data that you feel should be included in our characterisation work?

The NWIFCA acknowledge that the Crown Estate intend to review fisheries data later in the process but have the following suggestions at this stage.

- NWIFCA recommend using more than one year's data in the analyses, e.g. VMS data, fishing activity. Summarising the last 10 years data would represent fishing more accurately in characterisation modelling. It is worth noting that currently VMS only represents boats >12m, much of the inshore fishing fleet are <12m.
- Spawning and nursery grounds - additional impacts to consider; vibration, dispersal of sediments, destruction of spawning grounds, electromagnetic fields (although available research is poor in this field).

- Engage with the National Federation of Fishermen's Organisations regional representatives to improve commentary on fishing activities e.g. Whelks are a commercially important species in the Irish Sea currently not part of the commentary.
- Inshore fisheries are not represented in the characterisation modelling. The Irish Sea Characterisation Area falls within the NWIFCA district in the northern parts of the identified area. Types of fishing and gear used in the NWIFCA district include, hand gathering, trawls, nets, lines, potting and dredging under authorisation; for a range of species including Cockles, Winkles, Whelks, Mussels, Lobster, Crab, Shrimps, Nephrops, Cod, Bass, Thornback ray, Grey mullet, Turbot, Dover sole, Brill, Plaice and Flounder. The fishing community would be best placed to advise on fishing grounds, the NWIFCA advocate engaging with the fishers at the earliest opportunity.

4. Do you have any comments on the scale of risk outlined and the potential for offshore wind development in each region (i.e. RAG status/summary table)?

NWIFCA can only comment on the Irish Sea Characterisation Zone. The NWIFCA agrees that the risks outlined represent the data and weighting of the model components.

Following the re-examining of fisheries data included in the characterisation, NWIFCA would like to see areas that pose a risk of negatively impacting fishing and nursery grounds dropped from the characterisation zone, where this doesn't occur the NWIFCA would like to see significant/strategic mitigation risk rating. It is the NWIFCA's view that the Irish Sea is already subject to a large variety of restrictions to fishing which contribute to socio-economic decline in fishing communities, and are extremely concerned that the industry may not withstand losing much more critical areas to development. This could be strategically mitigated through communication with the local fishing industry to avoid selection of critical fishing/nursery grounds for development.

5. Do you have any comments on (a) the capacity we are proposing to release overall and/or (b) the capacity that could be accommodated at a regional scale?

No comment on overall capacity. Regionally the NWIFCA restates the sentiment from the above question and suggests that any development avoids grounds critical to fishing and or fish.

6. Do you have any further information and/or comments you wish to provide in order to inform the tender process (or to share with the applicants)?

No comment.

Yours sincerely,



Dr Melanie Hartley
Fisheries and Conservation Advisor