

# Fisheries in EMS Habitats Regulations Assessment for **Amber** and **Green** risk categories

**NWIFCA-DC-SAC-005**

Date completed: 11/11/2015

Completed by: J. Haines

**Site: Drigg Coast**

European Designated Sites: UK0013031 Drigg Coast Special Area of Conservation (SAC)

**European Marine Site: Drigg Coast**

## Fishing activities assessed:

**Gear type(s): Longlines (Demersal)**

The NWIFCA has assessed longlining fishing activity in the Drigg Coast Special Area of Conservation.

Activity data was collected by NWIFCA Fishery Officers who report that longlining in the Drigg Coast Special Area of Conservation is only performed on a recreational basis.

Defra's Revised Approach to the management of Fisheries in European Marine Sites (EMS), is limited to commercial fishing.

As longlining in the Drigg Coast SAC is only carried out recreationally, the NWIFCA has screened it out of this process.

Activity will continue to be monitored and should the nature of longlining in the Drigg Coast SAC change and become commercial it will be assessed in accordance with the Revised Approach.

## Annex 2: Natural England's consultation advice

Date: 29 February 2016  
Our ref: 178318  
Your ref: Formal Sign Off – Drigg Coast SAC



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**BY EMAIL ONLY**

Dear Jon

### **Formal Advice to NWIFCA. Review of Fisheries in Marine Protected Areas. Assessments for Drigg Coast Special Area of Conservation (SAC)**

Thank you for your consultation on the above which was received by Natural England on 08 February 2015.

Natural England is a non-departmental public body. Our statutory purpose is to ensure that the natural environment is conserved, enhanced, and managed for the benefit of present and future generations, thereby contributing to sustainable development.

In 2012, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) announced a revised approach to the management of commercial fisheries in EMSs<sup>1</sup>. The objective of this revised approach is to ensure that all existing and potential commercial fishing activities are managed in accordance with Article 6 of the Habitats Directive. This document states that for 'green' risk activities a site level assessment will be required if there are 'in combination effects' with other plans or projects. The Department's strong preference is that site level assessments be carried out in a manner that is consistent with the provisions of Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive. Appropriate management measures should be put in place to ensure that the fishing activity or activities either 1) have no likely significant effect on a site in view of its conservation objectives or 2) following assessment, can be concluded to have no adverse effect on the integrity of the site.

Natural England has considered the four Habitat Regulations Assessments (HRAs) prepared by North Western Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority (IFCA) for the purposes of making an assessment consistent with the provisions of Article 6(3). Please accept this letter as Natural England's formal advice on the assessment and the conclusions it makes. The assessments consider the effects of the following fishing activities in the Drigg Coast Special Area of Conservation (SAC), Morecambe Bay and Duddon Estuary potential Special Area of Protection :

- NWIFCA-DC-SAC 002 Intertidal Handwork – Winkles;
- NWIFCA-DC-SAC-003 Pots and Creels;
- NWIFCA-DC-SAC-004 –Gillnets and Trammel Nets;
- NWIFCA-DC-SAC-005 - Longlines (Demersal).

<sup>1</sup> Defra revised approach:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/revised-approach-to-the-management-of-commercial-fisheries-in-european-marine-sites-overarching-policy-and-delivery>

We are content that the best available and most up to date evidence of the fishing activities has been used to carry out the HRAs by North Western IFCA officers to determine whether management of an activity is required to conserve site features, and thus to ensure the protection of the features, from direct and indirect impacts, from the collection of marine fisheries resources.

We note that in combination effects will be assessed in a separate document when all initial Tests of Likely Significant Effects (tLSEs) for a site are completed.

**Subject to the outcomes of the in combination assessments, it is Natural England's view that through their two HRAs, North Western IFCA officers appear to have appropriately identified those activities that are likely to have a significant effect in view of the site's conservation objectives, and whether management measures are required in order to ensure that the assessed fishing activity or activities will have no adverse effect on the integrity of the EMS.**

We advise that Drigg Coast SAC overlaps with the Cumbria Coast Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ). In our published Conservation Advice for Drigg Coast SAC we identify the geographic extent of the Estuary SAC feature and the Intertidal mud and sand flat SAC feature, which is bounded within the Estuary SAC feature. These SAC features extend to the boundary of the MCZ but do not overlap with it. This should be taken into account when assessing the exposure of these SAC features to the fishing activities being considered. Taking account of the spatial separation of the fishing activities from the SAC features, we advise that no Likely Significant Effect (LSE) can be concluded.

We advise that fishing activities should be assessed against the Drigg Coast SAC Embryonic sand dune and Shifting dunes along the shoreline with *Ammophila arenaria* features ie whether there is potential for the fishing activities to affect the coastal processes and sand supply to these sand dune features. In view of the nature and location of these fishing activities we advise that no LSE can be concluded.

Subject to the above considerations, it is Natural England's view that any foreseeable risk, or harm to the site has been appropriately assessed; and a robust mechanism for re-assessing that risk is in place. This view is based on our current knowledge of the impacts of these fishing activities on the designated features.

We advise that in due course, under the Revised approach to fisheries management in MPAs, these fishing activities should be assessed against the conservation objectives of the Cumbria Coast MCZ.

If you require any further comments or have any queries regarding the above please contact me to discuss them further.

Yours sincerely



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