

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

NWIFCA-RA-SPA-008

Date completed: 08/12/15

Completed by: S. Temple

Site: Ribble and Alt Estuaries

European Designated Sites: UK9005103 Ribble and Alt Estuaries Special Protection Area (SPA)
UK11057 Ribble and Alt Estuaries Ramsar
Sefton Coast SAC
UK9020294 Liverpool Bay/Bae Lerpwl SPA adjoins this site

European Marine Site Ribble and Alt Estuaries

Qualifying Feature(s):

SPA and Ramsar

A037 *Cygnus columbianus bewickii*; Bewick's swan (Non-breeding)
A038 *Cygnus cygnus*; Whooper swan (Non-breeding)
A040 *Anser brachyrhynchus*; Pink-footed goose (Non-breeding)
A048 *Tadorna tadorna*; Common shelduck (Non-breeding)
A050 *Anas penelope*; Eurasian wigeon (Non-breeding)
A052 *Anas crecca*; Eurasian teal (Non-breeding)
A054 *Anas acuta*; Northern pintail (Non-breeding)
A130 *Haematopus ostralegus*; Eurasian oystercatcher (Non-breeding)
A137 *Charadrius hiaticula*; Ringed plover (Non-breeding)
A140 *Pluvialis apricaria*; European golden plover (Non-breeding)
A141 *Pluvialis squatarola*; Grey plover (Non-breeding)
A143 *Calidris canutus*; Red knot (Non-breeding)
A144 *Calidris alba*; Sanderling (Non-breeding)
A149 *Calidris alpina alpina*; Dunlin (Non-breeding)
A151 *Philomachus pugnax*; Ruff (Breeding)
A156 *Limosa limosa islandica*; Black-tailed godwit (Non-breeding)
A157 *Limosa lapponica*; Bar-tailed godwit (Non-breeding)
A162 *Tringa totanus*; Common redshank (Non-breeding)
A183 *Larus fuscus*; Lesser black-backed gull (Breeding)
A193 *Sterna hirundo*; Common tern (Breeding)

Waterbird assemblage

Seabird assemblage

Breeding Waterbird Assemblage

Natterjack toad (NON MARINE)

SAC

H2110. Embryonic shifting dunes
H2120. Shifting dunes along the shoreline with *Ammophila arenaria* ("white dunes"); Shifting dunes with marram
H2130. Fixed dunes with herbaceous vegetation ("grey dunes"); Dune grassland*
H2150. Atlantic decalcified fixed dunes (*Calluno-Ulicetea*); Coastal dune heathland*
H2170. Dunes with *Salix repens* ssp. *argentea* (*Salicion arenariae*); Dunes with creeping willow
H2190. Humid dune slacks
S1166. *Triturus cristatus*; Great crested newt
S1395. *Petalophyllum ralfsii*; Petalwort

Site sub-feature(s):

SPA and Ramsar

Supporting Habitat:

- intertidal rock
- intertidal sand and muddy sand
- intertidal mud
- intertidal mixed sediment
- coastal saltmarshes and saline reedbeds – (Saltmarsh)
- freshwater and coastal grazing marsh (Saltmarsh)
- coastal sand dunes (Sand dunes)
- water column

Great crested newt and Natterjack toad Supporting Habitat: Coastal sand dunes

Generic sub-feature(s):

Estuarine birds, Surface feeding birds, Benthic feeding seabirds, Intertidal mud and sand, Saltmarsh spp.

High Level Conservation Objectives:

With regard to the SPA and the individual species and/or assemblage of species for which the site has been classified and the Ramsar Site and the wetland habitats and/or species for which the site has been listed (the 'Qualifying Features' listed above), and subject to natural change;

Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the aims of the Wild Birds Directive and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the wise use of wetlands across the UK, by maintaining or restoring:

- The extent and distribution of the habitats of the qualifying features
- The structure and function of the habitats of the qualifying features
- The supporting processes on which the habitats of the qualifying features rely
- The population of each of the qualifying features, and,
- The distribution of the qualifying features within the site.

Sefton Coast SAC

With regard to the SAC and the natural habitats and/or species for which the site has been designated (the 'Qualifying Features' listed below), and subject to natural change;

Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the Favourable Conservation Status of its Qualifying Features, by maintaining or restoring;

- The extent and distribution of qualifying natural habitats and habitats of qualifying species
- The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats
- The structure and function of the habitats of qualifying species
- The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats and the habitats of qualifying species rely
- The populations of qualifying species, and,
- The distribution of qualifying species within the site.

Liverpool Bay SPA

Qualifying Feature(s):

A001 *Gavia stellate* Red-throated diver (non-breeding)
A065 *Melanitta nigra* Common scoter (non-breeding)
Waterbird assemblage

Site sub-feature(s):

Sublitoral sand and mud, Water column

Generic sub-feature(s):

Pursuit and plunge diving birds, Benthic feeding seabirds, Sub-tidal muddy sand.

High Level Conservation Objectives:

With regard to the SPA and the individual species and/or assemblage of species for which the site has been classified (the 'Qualifying Features' listed above), and subject to natural change;

Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the aims of the Wild Birds Directive, by maintaining or restoring;

- The extent and distribution of the habitats of the qualifying features
- The structure and function of the habitats of the qualifying features
- The supporting processes on which the habitats of the qualifying features rely
- The population of each of the qualifying features, and,
- The distribution of the qualifying features within the site.

Fishing activities assessed:**Gear type(s):**

Lines- Longlines (demersal)

1. Introduction

1.1 Need for an HRA assessment

In 2012, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) announced a revised approach to the management of commercial fisheries in European Marine Sites (EMS). 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 approach is being implemented using an evidence based, risk-prioritised, and phased basis. Risk prioritisation is informed by using a matrix of the generic sensitivity of the sub-features of EMS to a suite of fishing activities as a decision making tool. These sub-feature-activity combinations have been categorised according to specific definitions, as red, amber, green or blue.

Activity/feature interactions identified within the matrix as red risk have the highest priority for implementation of management measures by the end of 2013 in order to avoid the deterioration of Annex I features in line with obligations under Article 6(2) of the Habitats Directive.

Activity/feature interactions identified within the matrix as amber risk require a site-level assessment to determine whether management of an activity is required to conserve site features. Activity/feature interactions identified within the matrix as green also require a site level assessment if there are “in combination effects” with other plans or projects.

Some European Sites within the NWIFCA District consist of features that are not fully marine (eg. sand dunes) and therefore fall outwith of the EMS Review process. They have not been included in the original risk matrix. Due to the nature of some of the fisheries in the District, particularly intertidal fisheries, the NWIFCA has adopted the approach of carrying out full HRA on all the features (including non-marine) within European Sites to ensure that any potential risk from fishing activity has been identified and assessed.

Site level assessments are being carried out in a manner that is consistent with the provisions of Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive, that is to determine that fishing activities are not having an adverse effect on the integrity of the site, to inform a judgement on whether or not appropriate steps are required to avoid the deterioration of natural habitats and the habitats of species as well as disturbances of the species for which the areas have been designated, in so far as such disturbance could be significant in relation to the objectives of this directive.

If measures are required, the revised approach requires these to be implemented by 2016.

The purpose of this site specific assessment document is to assess whether or not in the view of NWIFCA the fishing activity of ‘demersal longlines’ has a likely significant effect on the qualifying features of the Ribble and Alt Estuaries European Site and on the basis of this assessment whether or not it can be concluded that ‘demersal longlines’ will not have an adverse effect on the integrity of this European Site.

1.2 Documents reviewed to inform this assessment

- Natural England's risk assessment Matrix of fishing activities and European habitat features and protected species¹
- Reference list² (Annex 1)
- Natural England's consultation advice (Annex 2)
- Site map – sub-feature/feature location and extent (Annex 3)
- Fishing activity data (map) (Annex 4)

2. Information about the EMS

(See cover pages). Throughout this document this group of designated sites will be referred to as a whole as "Ribble & Alt Estuaries European Site". This fishery is intertidal as well as demersal so both aspects are being assessed in this document.

3. Interest feature(s) of the EMS categorised as 'Red' risk and overview of management measure(s) (if applicable)

No interest features of the EMS categorised as 'Red' risk.

4. Information about the fishing activities within the site

Demersal longlining is a low level fishery in the Ribble and Alt Estuaries European Site, with around twelve fishermen occasionally setting longlines. Lines are set by foot on intertidal areas along the coast from Southport to Hightown and off Lytham. Areas of rocky ground are avoided in favour of sand.

Longlines are set out using small temporary stakes, with lengths of line with a number of hooks ranging from 10 hooks to around 100 hooks, with approximately 3-6ft spacing between them. Hooks are usually baited with lugworms but other bait can be used.

Species targeted include bass, flatfish, cod and thornback rays.

Access to fishing areas is by foot, 4x4 or tractor by established access routes. These include routes along the shore, slipways, paths, a route at Hall Road at Marshside Nature Reserve and through sand dunes near Formby and Altcar. Activity is mainly recreational and can occur all year round.

Current and recent activity in the Ribble and Alt Estuaries European Site is therefore low level.

5. Test for Likely Significant Effect (LSE)

The Habitats Regulations assessment (HRA) is a step-wise process and is first subject to a coarse test of whether a plan or project will cause a likely significant effect on an EMS³.

¹ See Fisheries in EMS matrix:

http://www.marinemanagement.org.uk/protecting/conservation/documents/ems_fisheries/populated_matrix3.xls

² Reference list will include literature cited in the assessment (peer, grey and site specific evidence e.g. research, data on natural disturbance/energy levels etc)

³ Managing Natura 2000 sites: http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/management/guidance_en.htm

Is the activity/activities directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site for nature conservation? NO

5.1 Table 1: Assessment of LSE

What pressures (such as abrasion, disturbance) are potentially exerted by the gear type(s) to features? (taken from NE Advice on Operations-anchored lines)

1. Above water noise
2. Visual disturbance
3. Underwater noise changes
4. Collision above and below water with lines
5. Litter
6. Removal of non-target species
7. Introduction or spread of non-indigenous species
8. Genetic modification and translocation of indigenous species
9. Abrasion/ disturbance of the substrate on the surface of the seabed (*supporting habitat*)
10. Penetration and/ or disturbance of the substrate below the surface of the seabed (*supporting habitat*)

SCREENED OUT-

Due to the nature of the longlining activity and the low levels of activity occurring in the European Site and existing background levels, the following potential pressures can be screened out as unlikely to be a pressure:

11. Barrier to species movement
12. Hydrocarbon and PAH contamination
13. Introduction of light
14. Introduction of other substances
15. Organic enrichment
16. Synthetic compound contamination
17. Transition elements and organo-metal contamination

Qualifying Feature	Sub-feature	Gear type and potential pressures	Potential for Likely Significant Effect?	Justification and evidence
A037 <i>Cygnus columbianus bewickii</i> ; Bewick's swan (Non-breeding)	Intertidal rock, intertidal sand and muddy sand, intertidal mud, intertidal mixed sediment, coastal saltmarshes and saline reedbeds – (Saltmarsh), freshwater and coastal grazing marsh (Saltmarsh), coastal sand dunes (Sand dunes), Water column	<i>Demersal longline</i> 1. Above water noise 2. Visual disturbance 3. Underwater noise changes 4. Interaction between feature and gear such as collision above and below water with lines	NO	(Estuarine birds) 1,2 & 3. Disturbance risk to birds through noise/ visual disturbance from fishing activity. Limited activity means that exposure of features to potential pressures and noise/ visual disturbance is minimal. Any noise exerted by the gear operation would be unlikely to exceed ambient noise levels in area. Activity is limited spatially and temporally and access to beach is via vehicle and foot on established access routes.
A038 <i>Cygnus cygnus</i> ; Whooper swan (Non-breeding)				
A040 <i>Anser brachyrhynchus</i> ; Pink-footed goose (Non-breeding)				
A048 <i>Tadorna tadorna</i> ; Common shelduck (Non-breeding)				
A050 <i>Anas penelope</i> ; Eurasian wigeon (Non-breeding)				
				4. Interaction (such as collision) between bird feature and fishing gear highly unlikely due to nature of activity, small numbers of lines set and limited scale of activity. Fishermen generally return to gear on next tide and remove catch. No bycatch of birds

A052 <i>Anas crecca</i> ; Eurasian teal (Non-breeding)				recorded.
A054 <i>Anas acuta</i> ; Northern pintail (Non-breeding)				5. Limited activity means that exposure of features to potential pressure is minimal and no greater than existing background levels.
A130 <i>Haematopus ostralegus</i> ; Eurasian oystercatcher (Non-breeding)				6. Biological disturbance-extraction of non-target species including accidental bycatch of birds and fish (bird prey). Limited activity means impact on bird feature food resource is minimal. No bycatch of birds recorded and limited activity means accidental removal of birds is unlikely.
A137 <i>Charadrius hiaticula</i> ; Ringed plover (Non-breeding)				
A140 <i>Pluvialis apricaria</i> ; European golden plover (Non-breeding)				7 & 8. Limited activity means that exposure of features to potential pressure is minimal and no greater than existing background levels. Fishermen don't move lines further than local area therefore unlikely to move non-indigenous species.
A141 <i>Pluvialis squatarola</i> ; Grey plover (Non-breeding)				
A143 <i>Calidris canutus</i> ; Red knot (Non-breeding)				9 & 10. Abrasion risk to substrate and sub-surface substrate-potential impact to substrate and associated communities through abrasion and movement of substrate via contact of lines. Fishing activity footprint is small-limited activity means that exposure of features and sub-features to potential pressures is minimal. Lines are generally set on sandy substrate. Area is naturally highly dynamic with strong currents, a large tidal range. Access to the fishery is via established access routes. No increase in disturbance on existing background levels.
A144 <i>Calidris alba</i> ; Sanderling (Non-breeding)				
A149 <i>Calidris alpina alpina</i> ; Dunlin (Non-breeding)				
A151 <i>Philomachus pugnax</i> ; Ruff (Breeding)				
A156 <i>Limosa limosa islandica</i> ; Black-tailed godwit (Non-breeding)				
A157 <i>Limosa lapponica</i> ; Bar-tailed godwit (Non-breeding)				Estuarine bird feature and saltmarsh activity interactions categorised as "Blue" in generic matrix.
A162 <i>Tringa totanus</i> ; Common redshank (Non-breeding)				
A183 <i>Larus fuscus</i> ; Lesser black-backed gull (Breeding)	Intertidal rock, intertidal sand and muddy sand, intertidal mud, intertidal	<i>Demersal longline</i> 1. Above water noise 2. Visual	NO	(Surface feeding seabirds) 1,2 & 3. Disturbance risk to birds through noise/ visual disturbance from fishing activity. Limited

<p>A193 <i>Sterna hirundo</i>; Common tern (Breeding)</p>	<p>mixed sediment, coastal saltmarshes and saline reedbeds – (Saltmarsh), freshwater and coastal grazing marsh (Saltmarsh), coastal sand dunes (Sand dunes), Water column</p>	<p>3. disturbance Underwater noise changes</p> <p>4. Interaction between feature and gear such as collision above and below water with lines</p> <p>5. Litter</p> <p>6. Removal of non-target species</p> <p>7. Introduction or spread of non-indigenous species</p> <p>8. Genetic modification and translocation of indigenous species</p> <p>9. Abrasion/ disturbance of the substrate on the surface of the seabed (<i>supporting habitat</i>)</p> <p>10. Penetration and/ or disturbance of the substrate below the surface of the seabed (<i>supporting habitat</i>)</p>	<p>activity means that exposure of features to potential pressures and noise/ visual disturbance is minimal. Any noise exerted by the gear operation would be unlikely to exceed ambient noise levels in area. Activity is limited spatially and temporally and access to beach is via vehicle and foot on established access routes.</p> <p>4. Interaction (such as collision) between bird feature and fishing gear highly unlikely due to nature of activity, small numbers of lines set and limited scale of activity. Fishermen generally return to gear on next tide and remove catch. No bycatch of birds recorded.</p> <p>5. Limited activity means that exposure of features to potential pressure is minimal and no greater than existing background levels.</p> <p>6. Biological disturbance- extraction of non- target species including accidental bycatch of birds and fish (bird prey). Limited activity means impact on bird feature food resource is minimal. No bycatch of birds recorded and limited activity means accidental removal of birds is unlikely.</p> <p>7 & 8. Limited activity means that exposure of features to potential pressure is minimal and no greater than existing background levels. Fishermen don't move lines further than local area therefore unlikely to move non-indigenous species.</p> <p>9 & 10. Abrasion risk to substrate and sub-surface substrate-potential impact to substrate and associated communities through abrasion and movement of substrate via contact of lines. Fishing activity footprint is small-limited activity means that exposure of features and sub-features to potential pressures is minimal. Lines are generally set on sandy substrate. Area is naturally highly dynamic with strong currents, a large tidal range. Access to the fishery is via established access routes. No increase in disturbance on existing background levels.</p>
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<p>Waterbird assemblage</p>	<p>Intertidal rock, intertidal sand and muddy sand, intertidal mud, intertidal mixed sediment, coastal saltmarshes and saline reedbeds – (Saltmarsh), freshwater and coastal grazing marsh (Saltmarsh), coastal sand dunes (Sand dunes), Water column</p>	<p><i>Demersal longline</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Above water noise 2. Visual disturbance 3. Underwater noise changes 4. Interaction between feature and gear such as collision above and below water with lines 5. Litter 6. Removal of non-target species 7. Introduction or spread of non-indigenous species 8. Genetic modification and translocation of indigenous species 9. Abrasion/ disturbance of the substrate on the surface of the seabed (<i>supporting habitat</i>) 10. Penetration and/ or disturbance of the substrate below the surface of the seabed (<i>supporting habitat</i>) 	<p>NO</p>	<p>1,2 & 3. Disturbance risk to birds through noise/ visual disturbance from fishing activity. Limited activity means that exposure of features to potential pressures and noise/ visual disturbance is minimal. Any noise exerted by the gear operation would be unlikely to exceed ambient noise levels in area. Activity is limited spatially and temporally and access to beach is via vehicle and foot on established access routes.</p> <p>4. Interaction (such as collision) between bird feature and fishing gear highly unlikely due to nature of activity, small numbers of lines set and limited scale of activity. Fishermen generally return to gear on next tide and remove catch. No bycatch of birds recorded.</p> <p>5. Limited activity means that exposure of features to potential pressure is minimal and no greater than existing background levels.</p> <p>6. Biological disturbance-extraction of non- target species including accidental bycatch of birds and fish (bird prey). Limited activity means impact on bird feature food resource is minimal. No bycatch of birds recorded and limited activity means accidental removal of birds is unlikely.</p> <p>7 & 8. Limited activity means that exposure of features to potential pressure is minimal and no greater than existing background levels. Fishermen don't move lines further than local area therefore unlikely to move non-indigenous species.</p> <p>9 & 10. Abrasion risk to substrate and sub-surface substrate-potential impact to substrate and associated communities through abrasion and movement of substrate via contact of lines. Fishing activity footprint is small-limited activity means that exposure of features and sub-features to potential pressures is minimal. Lines are generally set on sandy substrate. Area is naturally highly dynamic with strong currents, a large tidal range. Access to the fishery is via established access routes. No increase in disturbance on existing background levels.</p>
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<p>Seabird assemblage</p>	<p>Intertidal rock, intertidal sand and muddy sand, intertidal mud, intertidal mixed sediment, coastal saltmarshes and saline reedbeds – (Saltmarsh), freshwater and coastal grazing marsh (Saltmarsh), coastal sand dunes (Sand dunes), Water column</p>	<p><i>Demersal longline</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Above water noise 2. Visual disturbance 3. Underwater noise changes 4. Interaction between feature and gear such as collision above and below water with lines 5. Litter 6. Removal of non-target species 7. Introduction or spread of non-indigenous species 8. Genetic modification and translocation of indigenous species 9. Abrasion/ disturbance of the substrate on the surface of the seabed (<i>supporting habitat</i>) 10. Penetration and/ or disturbance of the substrate below the surface of the seabed (<i>supporting habitat</i>) 	<p>NO</p>	<p>1,2 & 3. Disturbance risk to birds through noise/ visual disturbance from fishing activity. Limited activity means that exposure of features to potential pressures and noise/ visual disturbance is minimal. Any noise exerted by the gear operation would be unlikely to exceed ambient noise levels in area. Activity is limited spatially and temporally and access to beach is via vehicle and foot on established access routes.</p> <p>4. Interaction (such as collision) between bird feature and fishing gear highly unlikely due to nature of activity, small numbers of lines set and limited scale of activity. Fishermen generally return to gear on next tide and remove catch. No bycatch of birds recorded.</p> <p>5. Limited activity means that exposure of features to potential pressure is minimal and no greater than existing background levels.</p> <p>6. Biological disturbance- extraction of non- target species including accidental bycatch of birds and fish (bird prey). Limited activity means impact on bird feature food resource is minimal. No bycatch of birds recorded and limited activity means accidental removal of birds is unlikely.</p> <p>7 & 8. Limited activity means that exposure of features to potential pressure is minimal and no greater than existing background levels. Fishermen don't move lines further than local area therefore unlikely to move non-indigenous species.</p> <p>9 & 10. Abrasion risk to substrate and sub-surface substrate-potential impact to substrate and associated communities through abrasion and movement of substrate via contact of lines. Fishing activity footprint is small-limited activity means that exposure of features and sub-features to potential pressures is minimal. Lines are generally set on sandy substrate. Area is naturally highly dynamic with strong currents, a large tidal range. Access to the fishery is via established access routes. No increase in disturbance on existing background levels.</p>
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Breeding waterbird assemblage	Intertidal rock, intertidal sand and muddy sand, intertidal mud, intertidal mixed sediment, coastal saltmarshes and saline reedbeds – (Saltmarsh), freshwater and coastal grazing marsh (Saltmarsh), coastal sand dunes (Sand dunes), Water column	<p><i>Demersal longline</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Above water noise 2. Visual disturbance 3. Underwater noise changes 4. Interaction between feature and gear such as collision above and below water with lines 5. Litter 6. Removal of non-target species 7. Introduction or spread of non-indigenous species 8. Genetic modification and translocation of indigenous species 9. Abrasion/ disturbance of the substrate on the surface of the seabed (<i>supporting habitat</i>) 10. Penetration and/ or disturbance of the substrate below the surface of the seabed (<i>supporting habitat</i>) 	NO	<p>1,2 & 3. Disturbance risk to birds through noise/ visual disturbance from fishing activity. Limited activity means that exposure of features to potential pressures and noise/ visual disturbance is minimal. Any noise exerted by the gear operation would be unlikely to exceed ambient noise levels in area. Activity is limited spatially and temporally and access to beach is via vehicle and foot on established access routes.</p> <p>4. Interaction (such as collision) between bird feature and fishing gear highly unlikely due to nature of activity, small numbers of lines set and limited scale of activity. Fishermen generally return to gear on next tide and remove catch. No bycatch of birds recorded.</p> <p>5. Limited activity means that exposure of features to potential pressure is minimal and no greater than existing background levels.</p> <p>6. Biological disturbance-extraction of non- target species including accidental bycatch of birds and fish (bird prey). Limited activity means impact on bird feature food resource is minimal. No bycatch of birds recorded and limited activity means accidental removal of birds is unlikely.</p> <p>7 & 8. Limited activity means that exposure of features to potential pressure is minimal and no greater than existing background levels. Fishermen don't move lines further than local area therefore unlikely to move non-indigenous species.</p> <p>9 & 10. Abrasion risk to substrate and sub-surface substrate-potential impact to substrate and associated communities through abrasion and movement of substrate via contact of lines. Fishing activity footprint is small-limited activity means that exposure of features and sub-features to potential pressures is minimal. Lines are generally set on sandy substrate. Area is naturally highly dynamic with strong currents, a large tidal range. Access to the fishery is via established access routes. No increase in disturbance on existing background levels.</p>
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Natterjack toad (NON MARINE)	Intertidal rock, intertidal sand and muddy sand, intertidal mud, intertidal mixed sediment, coastal saltmarshes and saline reedbeds – (Saltmarsh), freshwater and coastal grazing marsh (Saltmarsh), coastal sand dunes (Sand dunes), Water column	<i>Demersal longline</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Above water noise 2. Visual disturbance 3. Underwater noise changes 4. Interaction between feature and gear such as collision above and below water with lines 5. Litter 6. Removal of non-target species 7. Introduction or spread of non-indigenous species 8. Genetic modification and translocation of indigenous species 9. Abrasion/ disturbance of the substrate on the surface of the seabed (<i>supporting habitat</i>) 10. Penetration and/ or disturbance of the substrate below the surface of the seabed (<i>supporting habitat</i>) 	NO	<p>1, 2 &3. Feature present on land in area near Hightown Dunes. Low levels of activity and access to beach is via vehicle and foot on established access routes or coastal path, therefore no increase on existing background disturbance levels.</p> <p>4. No interaction between feature and pressure.</p> <p>5. Low levels of activity and access to beach is by vehicle and foot on established access routes, therefore no increase on existing background disturbance levels.</p> <p>6. No interaction between feature and pressure.</p> <p>7 & 8. No interaction between feature and pressure.</p> <p>9 & 10. No interaction between feature and pressure.</p>
H2110. Embryonic shifting dunes		<i>Demersal longline</i>	NO	Access to beach is via foot or vehicle on established access routes. No increase on existing background disturbance levels.

H2120. Shifting dunes along the shoreline with <i>Ammophila arenaria</i> ("white dunes"); Shifting dunes with marram		<i>Demersal longline</i>	NO	Access to beach is via foot or vehicle on established access routes. No increase on existing background disturbance levels.
H2130. Fixed dunes with herbaceous vegetation ("grey dunes"); Dune grassland*		<i>Demersal longline</i>	NO	Access to beach is via foot or vehicle on established access routes. No increase on existing background disturbance levels.
H2150. Atlantic decalcified fixed dunes (<i>Calluno-Ulicetea</i>); Coastal dune heathland*		<i>Demersal longline</i>	NO	Access to beach is via foot or vehicle on established access routes. No increase on existing background disturbance levels.
H2170. Dunes with <i>Salix repens</i> ssp. <i>argentea</i> (<i>Salicion arenariae</i>); Dunes with creeping willow		<i>Demersal longline</i>	NO	Access to beach is via foot or vehicle on established access routes. No increase on existing background disturbance levels.
H2190. Humid dune slacks		<i>Demersal longline</i>	NO	Access to beach is via foot or vehicle on established access routes. No increase on existing background disturbance levels.
S1166. <i>Triturus cristatus</i> ; Great crested newt	Coastal sand dunes	<i>Demersal longline</i>	NO	Access to beach is via foot or vehicle on established access routes.
S1395. <i>Petalophyllum ralfsii</i> ; Petalwort		<i>Demersal longline</i>	NO	Access to beach is via foot or vehicle on established access routes.

<p>A001 <i>Gavia stellata</i> Red-throated diver (non-breeding)</p>	<p>Sub-tidal muddy sand, water column</p>	<p><i>Demersal longline</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Above water noise 2. Visual disturbance 3. Underwater noise changes 4. Interaction between feature and gear such as collision above and below water with lines 5. Litter 6. Removal of non-target and target species 7. Introduction or spread of non-indigenous species 8. Genetic modification and translocation of indigenous species 9. Abrasion/ disturbance of the substrate on the surface of the seabed (<i>supporting habitat</i>) 10. Penetration and/ or disturbance of the substrate below the surface of the seabed (<i>supporting habitat</i>) 	<p>NO</p>	<p>1,2 & 3. Disturbance risk to birds through noise/ visual disturbance from fishing activity. Limited activity means that exposure of features to potential pressures and noise/ visual disturbance is minimal. Any noise exerted by the gear operation would be unlikely to exceed ambient noise levels in area. Activity is limited spatially and temporally and access to beach is via vehicle and foot on established access routes.</p> <p>4. Interaction (such as collision) between bird feature and fishing gear highly unlikely due to nature of activity, small numbers of lines set and limited scale of activity. Fishermen generally return to gear on next tide and remove catch. No bycatch of birds recorded.</p> <p>5. Limited activity means that exposure of features to potential pressure is minimal and no greater than existing background levels.</p> <p>6. Biological disturbance- extraction of non- target species including accidental bycatch of birds and fish (bird prey). Limited activity means impact on bird feature food resource is minimal. No bycatch of birds recorded and limited activity means accidental removal of birds is unlikely.</p> <p>7 & 8. Limited activity means that exposure of features to potential pressure is minimal and no greater than existing background levels. Fishermen don't move lines further than local area therefore unlikely to move non-indigenous species.</p> <p>9 & 10. Abrasion risk to substrate and sub-surface substrate-potential impact to substrate and associated communities through abrasion and movement of substrate via contact of lines. Fishing activity footprint is small-limited activity means that exposure of features and sub-features to potential pressures is minimal. Lines are generally set on sandy substrate. Area is naturally highly dynamic with strong currents, a large tidal range. Access to the fishery is via established access routes. No increase in disturbance on existing background levels.</p>
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<p>A065 <i>Melanitta nigra</i> Common scoter (non-breeding)</p>	<p>Sub-tidal muddy sand, water column</p>	<p><i>Demersal longline</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Above water noise 2. Visual disturbance 3. Underwater noise changes 4. Interaction between feature and gear such as collision above and below water with lines 5. Litter 6. Removal of non-target and target species 7. Introduction or spread of non-indigenous species 8. Genetic modification and translocation of indigenous species 9. Abrasion/ disturbance of the substrate on the surface of the seabed (<i>supporting habitat</i>) 10. Penetration and/ or disturbance of the substrate below the surface of the seabed (<i>supporting habitat</i>) 	<p>NO</p>	<p>1,2 & 3. Disturbance risk to birds through noise/ visual disturbance from fishing activity. Limited activity means that exposure of features to potential pressures and noise/ visual disturbance is minimal. Any noise exerted by the gear operation would be unlikely to exceed ambient noise levels in area. Activity is limited spatially and temporally and access to beach is via vehicle and foot on established access routes.</p> <p>4. Interaction (such as collision) between bird feature and fishing gear highly unlikely due to nature of activity, small numbers of lines set and limited scale of activity. Fishermen generally return to gear on next tide and remove catch. No bycatch of birds recorded.</p> <p>5. Limited activity means that exposure of features to potential pressure is minimal and no greater than existing background levels.</p> <p>6. Biological disturbance- extraction of non- target species including accidental bycatch of birds and fish (bird prey). Limited activity means impact on bird feature food resource is minimal. No bycatch of birds recorded and limited activity means accidental removal of birds is unlikely.</p> <p>7 & 8. Limited activity means that exposure of features to potential pressure is minimal and no greater than existing background levels. Fishermen don't move lines further than local area therefore unlikely to move non-indigenous species.</p> <p>9 & 10. Abrasion risk to substrate and sub-surface substrate-potential impact to substrate and associated communities through abrasion and movement of substrate via contact of lines. Fishing activity footprint is small-limited activity means that exposure of features and sub-features to potential pressures is minimal. Lines are generally set on sandy substrate. Area is naturally highly dynamic with strong currents, a large tidal range. Access to the fishery is via established access routes. No increase in disturbance on existing background levels.</p>
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<p>Waterbird assemblage</p>	<p>Sub-tidal muddy sand, water column</p>	<p><i>Demersal longline</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Above water noise 2. Visual disturbance 3. Underwater noise changes 4. Interaction between feature and gear such as collision above and below water with lines 5. Litter 6. Removal of non-target and target species 7. Introduction or spread of non-indigenous species 8. Genetic modification and translocation of indigenous species 9. Abrasion/ disturbance of the substrate on the surface of the seabed (<i>supporting habitat</i>) 10. Penetration and/ or disturbance of the substrate below the surface of the seabed (<i>supporting habitat</i>) 	<p>NO</p>	<p>1,2 & 3. Disturbance risk to birds through noise/ visual disturbance from fishing activity. Limited activity means that exposure of features to potential pressures and noise/ visual disturbance is minimal. Any noise exerted by the gear operation would be unlikely to exceed ambient noise levels in area. Activity is limited spatially and temporally and access to beach is via vehicle and foot on established access routes.</p> <p>4. Interaction (such as collision) between bird feature and fishing gear highly unlikely due to nature of activity, small numbers of lines set and limited scale of activity. Fishermen generally return to gear on next tide and remove catch. No bycatch of birds recorded.</p> <p>5. Limited activity means that exposure of features to potential pressure is minimal and no greater than existing background levels.</p> <p>6. Biological disturbance- extraction of non- target species including accidental bycatch of birds and fish (bird prey). Limited activity means impact on bird feature food resource is minimal. No bycatch of birds recorded and limited activity means accidental removal of birds is unlikely.</p> <p>7 & 8. Limited activity means that exposure of features to potential pressure is minimal and no greater than existing background levels. Fishermen don't move lines further than local area therefore unlikely to move non-indigenous species.</p> <p>9 & 10. Abrasion risk to substrate and sub-surface substrate-potential impact to substrate and associated communities through abrasion and movement of substrate via contact of lines. Fishing activity footprint is small-limited activity means that exposure of features and sub-features to potential pressures is minimal. Lines are generally set on sandy substrate. Area is naturally highly dynamic with strong currents, a large tidal range. Access to the fishery is via established access routes. No increase in disturbance on existing background levels.</p>
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<p>Is the potential scale or magnitude of any effect likely to be significant?⁴</p>	<p>Alone</p> <p>No</p> <p>Comments :</p> <p>Small scale activity with very limited impacts on a small number of features.</p>	<p>OR In-combination⁵</p> <p>Uncertain</p> <p>Comments :</p> <p>These activities also occur at the site:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beam trawl (whitefish, shrimp) • Light otter trawls • Handworking (access from land and vessel) • Static- fixed nets • Drift nets (demersal and pelagic) • Pots/creels • Shrimp push nets • Digging for bait <p>In combination effects will be assessed when all initial TLSEs for a site are completed.</p>
<p>Have NE been consulted on this LSE test? If yes, what was NE's advice?</p>	<p>Yes</p>	

7. Conclusion⁶

Taking into account the information detailed in the Test of Likely Significant Effect, it can be concluded that fishing using demersal longlines has no likely significant effect on the Ribble and Alt Estuaries European Site interest features.

8. In-combination assessment¹³

In combination effects will be assessed in a separate document when all initial TLSEs for a site are completed.

9. Summary of consultation with Natural England

See attached advice from Natural England (Annex 2).

⁴ Yes or uncertain: completion of AA required. If no: LSE required only.

⁵ If conclusion of LSE alone an in-combination assessment is not required.

⁶ If conclusion of adverse affect alone an in-combination assessment is not required.

10. Integrity test

As this assessment has concluded no likely significant effect on the interest features of the Ribble and Alt Estuaries European Site in the NWIFCA district, there is no need to conduct an integrity test for this activity.

Annex 1: Reference list

Brown, S. 2014. *Personal communication from IFCA local fisheries officer- 9th June and 25th August 2015*

Natural England Marine Conservation Advice for Special Protection Area: Ribble and Alt Estuaries, published March 2015, including Advice on Operations. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/marine-conservation-advice-for-special-protection-area-ribble-and-alt-estuaries-uk9005103>

Annex 2: Natural England's consultation advice

Date: 11 December 2015
Our ref: 174084
Your ref: NWIFCA-RA-SPA-005, NWIFCA-RA-SPA_008 & NWIFCA-RA-SPA-010



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LA5 9BY

Hornbeam House
Crewe Business Park
Electra Way
Crewe
Cheshire
CW1 6GJ

T 0300 060 3900

BY EMAIL ONLY

Dear Sarah

Formal Advice to NWIFCA. Fisheries in EMS Habitats Regulations Assessment for Amber risk Categories in Ribble & Alt Estuaries SPA, including gear types: Pots/creels (NWIFCA-RA-SPA-005), longlines (demersal) (NWIFCA-RA-SPA-008) and shrimp push nets (NWIFCA-RA-SPA-010).

Thank you for your consultation on the above which was received by Natural England on 08 December 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 EMSs¹. 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 three 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 on the Ribble & Alt Estuaries Special Protection Area (SPA):

- NWIFCA-RA-SPA-005: Pots/creels;
- NWIFCA-RA-SPA-008: Lines: longlines (demersal);
- NWIFCA-RA-SPA-010: Seine nets & other: shrimp push nets

¹ 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 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 three 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.

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.

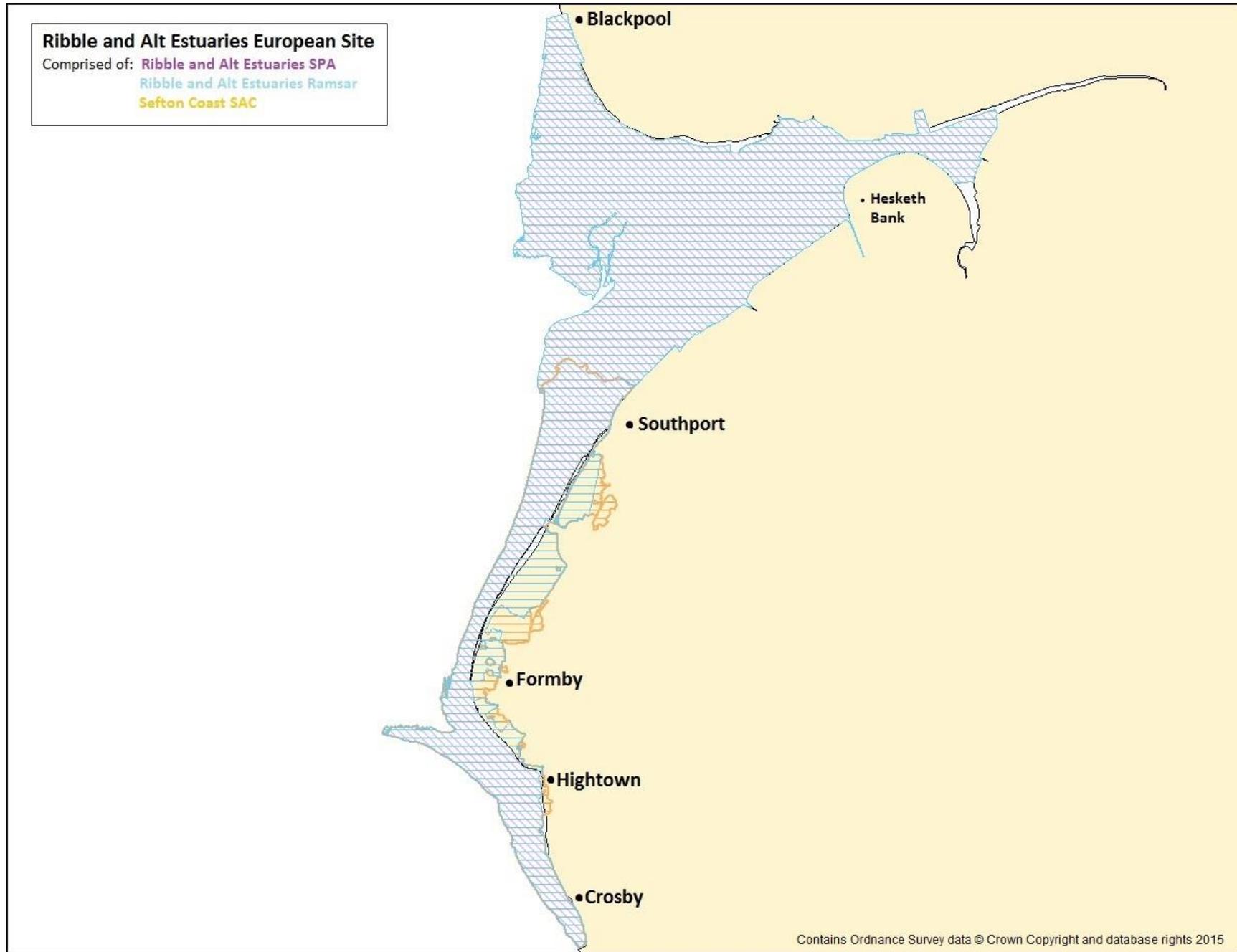
If you require any further comments or have any queries regarding the above please contact me to discuss them further.

Yours sincerely



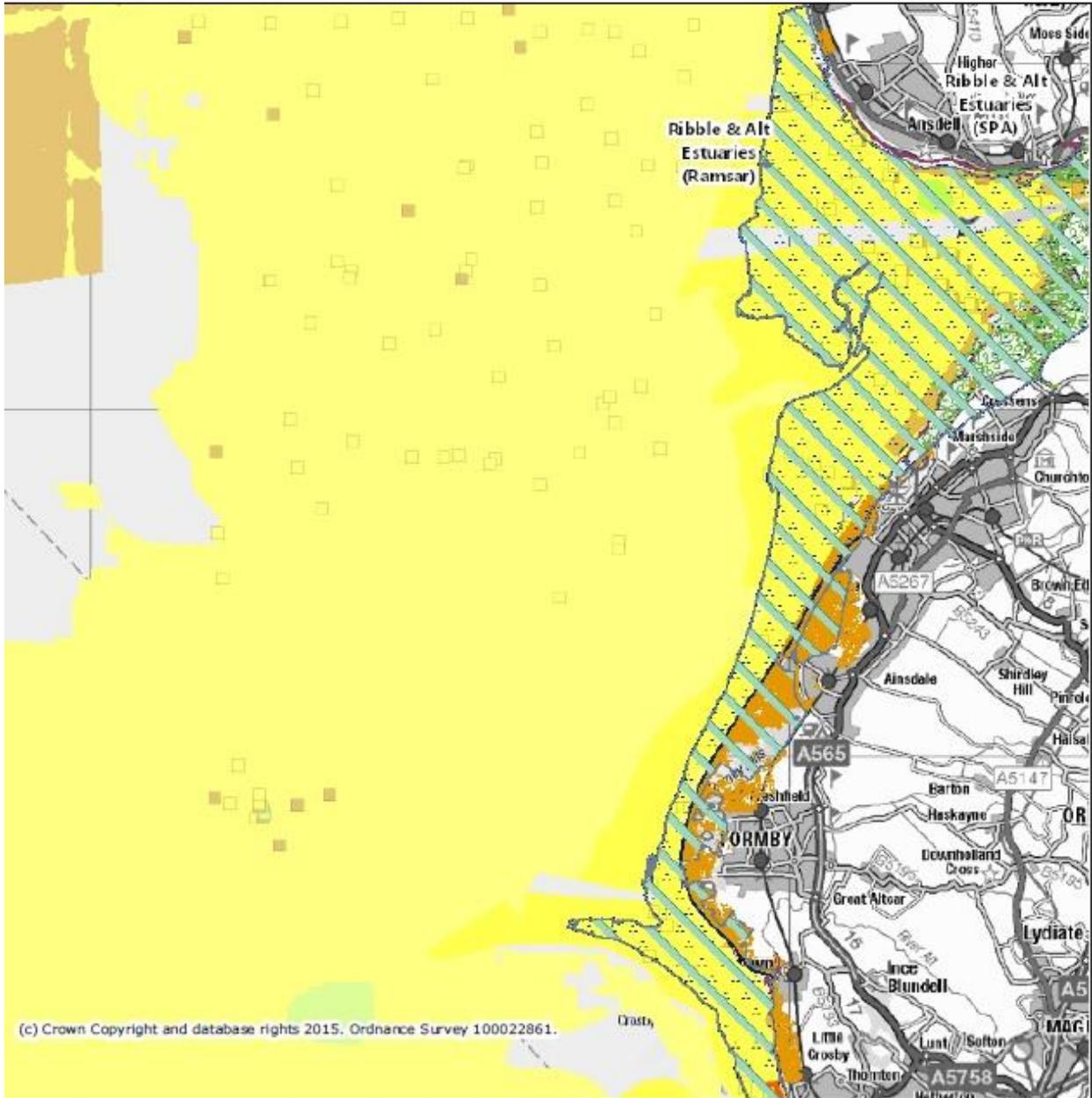
Emily Hardman
Cheshire, Greater Manchester, Merseyside and Lancashire Area Team
Email: Emily.Hardman@naturalengland.org.uk
Tel: 0300 060 4011

Annex 3: Site Map



Annex 4: Feature map (Magic Map mapping)- Longlines may be set anywhere along the coast in the Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA and Ramsar area.

Ribble & Alt Estuaries SPA and Ramsar Magic Map



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Legend

- Ramsar Sites (England)
- Special Protection Areas (England)
- Priority Habitat Inventory - Coastal Sand Dunes (England)
- Intertidal coarse sediment (A2.1)
- Intertidal sand and muddy sand (A2.2)
- Intertidal mud (A2.3)
- Intertidal mixed sediments (A2.4)
- Intertidal seagrass beds (A2.61)
- Intertidal coarse sediment (A2.1)
- Intertidal sand and muddy sand (A2.2)

Projection = OSGB36

xmin = 278400

ymin = 394000

xmax = 367500

ymax = 437800

Map produced by MAGIC on 23 November, 2015.
 Copyright resides with the data suppliers and the map must not be reproduced without their permission.
 Some information in MAGIC is a snapshot of the information that is being maintained or continually updated by the originating organisation. Please refer to the metadata for details as information may be illustrative or representative rather than definitive at this stage.

Annex 5: Longlining activity



Fig 1. Example of a set beach longline. (Clockwise from top.) Extent of line, Hook baited with lugworm, Post for line attachment.