



THE PLANNING ACT 2008

THE INFRASTRUCTURE PLANNING (EXAMINATION PROCEDURE) RULES
2010

**Natural England review of G5.9 Revised Ornithology Baseline - Revision: 01
[REP5-087]**

For:

The construction and operation of Hornsea Project Four Offshore Wind Farm, located approximately 69 km from the East Riding of Yorkshire in the Southern North Sea, covering an area of approximately 468 km².

Planning Inspectorate Reference EN010098

4th July 2022

Natural England have reviewed the Applicant's Deadline 5 submission G5.9 Revised Ornithology Baseline [REP5-087]. During this review Natural England identified several points requiring clarification and submitted these to the Applicant directly on 24th June 2022. For transparency, we provide the requested clarifications below.

1. Table 1 (Gannet MRSea_V2 estimates) appears to have been populated incorrectly with the values for flying and sitting birds not summing to the total estimates. This should be checked and a revised table provided if needed.
2. Clarification is needed as to how the model outputs are ordered for guillemot in Figures 23-25 of the revised baseline document. It looks like there might be a month/year labelling system but it isn't clear.
3. There is one survey in Figures 23-25 where there appears to be no guillemot on several transects at all (M10_S01_D01_17). Please confirm that this is correct, and not a plotting error or some other data treatment error.
4. We note that LCL and UCL values have not been provided alongside the final abundance and density estimates and consider them necessary to understand the central estimates. As the central estimates are corrected by adding additional apportioned birds/birds beneath the water numbers for each survey for certain species, we suggest that the UCL and LCL should be adjusted according to the proportional increase in the central estimate. This would provide indicative confidence limits for the final estimate that can be used in the assessment. For example, if the central abundance estimate was increased from 1453 to 2066 (addition of 613 birds and percentage increase of 42.19%) the UCL and LCL values would be multiplied by 1.4219 (e.g. for a LCL of 714, this would increase to 1015.5). Could Hornsea Four please confirm whether they agree with this approach to deriving the UCLs and LCLs for the final estimates and if they are happy to submit these into examination.
5. It should be confirmed that the 'final density' estimates are simply the final abundance estimates divided by the relevant area (e.g. the array = 468 km²) and that the same method detailed in point 2 could be used to derive associated final UCL and LCL values.

The Applicant responded to our queries on 28th June 2022, with a draft document (Hornsea Four Baseline Clarifications) which we understand is to be submitted into Examination at Deadline 5a, alongside a revised Ornithology Baseline report containing any resultant updates to the baseline. We appreciate the timely response of the Applicant to these clarifications and consider sufficient answers have been provided to address issues 1, 2, 3 and 5. Unfortunately the response to point 4 was received too late to be considered in this submission. We will provide further comments on this point post Deadline 5a.

We can confirm that the revised baseline data in REP5-087 have been produced using an agreed combination of model- and design-based methods that have addressed the outstanding concerns raised regarding the Application baseline. Once the issues identified above have been rectified, Natural England will be in position to agree the baseline data used for the assessment.