

Marine and Fisheries Division response: EN010112 Awel y Môr Offshore Wind Farm project

Marine Conservation Advice Response

Marine Conservation Advice (MCA) welcomes the opportunity to answer *The Examining Authority's written questions and requests for information (ExQ1)*.

<https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/wp-content/ipc/uploads/projects/EN010112/EN010112-000711-AYMO%20-%20ExQ1%20Final%20-%20English.pdf>

2.102: DAERANI: RIAA: Please confirm if there are any additional European/Ramsar sites or qualifying features which have not been included in [APP-027].

https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/wp-content/ipc/uploads/projects/EN010112/EN010112-000144-5.2_AyM_RIAA_vFinal.pdf

MCA welcomes the consideration of the North Channel SAC, Copeland Islands SPA and Rathlin Island SPA.

Based on the following screening metrics, MCA agrees that all relevant SACs are considered regarding marine mammals:

- all SACs within 100km of the project should be screened for Grey seals (*Halichoerus grypus*)
- all SACs within 50km should be screened for Harbour seals (*Phoca vitulina*)
- all SACs within 100km should be screened for Harbour porpoise (*Phocoena phocoena*)

The NIEA's Ornithology Team should be consulted regarding any additional Seabird considerations.

2.103: DAERANI: RIAA: Please confirm if the assessment in [APP-027] refers to the correct conservation objectives for the European/Ramsar sites under consideration.

MCA finds the conservation objectives to be correct for Rathlin Island SPA and Copeland Island SPA. However, MCA advises for the North Channel SAC conservation objectives all of the following information is included:

'To ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained and that it makes an appropriate contribution to maintaining Favourable Conservation Status (FCS) for harbour porpoise in UK waters.

In the context of natural change, this will be achieved by ensuring that:

- 1. Harbour porpoise is a viable component of the site;*
- 2. There is no significant disturbance of the species; and*
- 3. The condition of supporting habitats and processes, and the availability of prey is maintained.'* ([North Channel MPA JNCC](#))

Further advice can be sought from the Marine Conservation Advice Team, DAERA Marine and Fisheries Division, Klondyke Building, Cromac Avenue, Belfast, BT7 2JA. Tel: [REDACTED] or email: [REDACTED]