Rampion 2 Wind Farm

Category 8: Examination Documents

Applicant's Post Hearing Submission – Issue Specific Hearing 1
Appendix 12 – Further Information for Action Point 31 – Winter Fishing
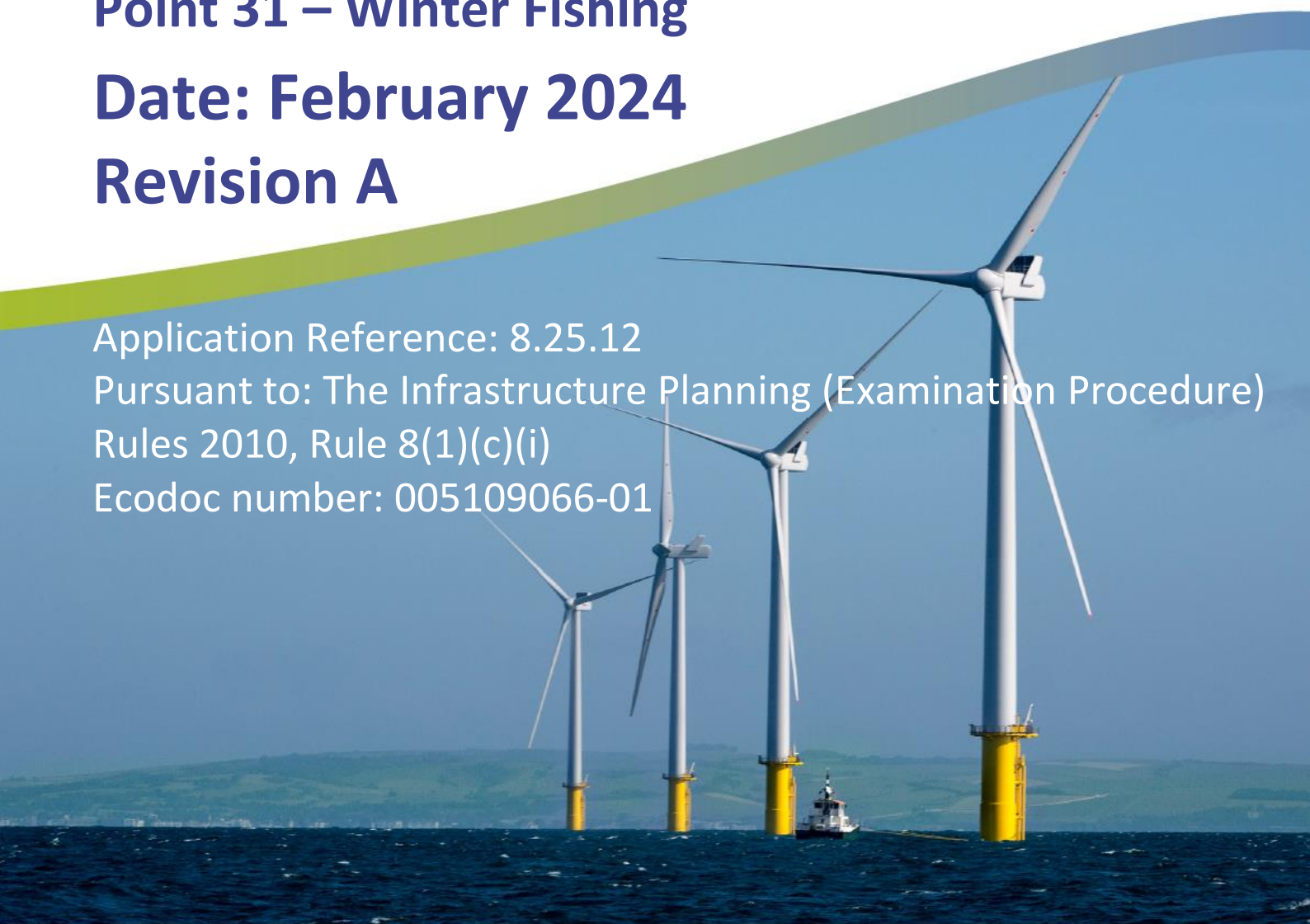
Date: February 2024
Revision A

Application Reference: 8.25.12
Pursuant to: The Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010, Rule 8(1)(c)(i)
Ecodoc number: 005109066-01

Document revisions

Revision	Date	Status/reason for issue	Author	Checked by	Approved by
A	28/02/2024	Final for Deadline 1	GoBe	RED	RED

1. Introduction

1.1 Overview and purpose of this Document

1.1.1   Rampion Extension Development Limited (hereafter referred to as 'RED') (the 'Applicant') is developing the Rampion 2 Offshore Wind Farm Project ('Rampion 2') located adjacent to the existing Rampion Offshore Wind Farm Project ('Rampion 1') in the English Channel.

1.1.2   Rampion 2 will be located between 13km and 26km from the Sussex Coast in the English Channel and the offshore array area will occupy an area of approximately 160km^2. A detailed description of the Proposed Development is set out in **Chapter 4: The Proposed Development, Volume 2** of the Environmental Statement (ES) **[APP-045]**, submitted with the Development Consent Order (DCO) Application.

1.1.3   This document has been prepared in response to the following request raised in relation to commercial fisheries during the Rampion 2 Issue Specific Hearing 1 (ISH) by the Examining Authority:

- Issue Specific Hearing Action Point 31: Information on likely fishing activity in winter months in the array area, with evidence from Rampion 1.

1.1.4   The information presented is this document draws upon data sources used to inform the Rampion 2 commercial fisheries assessment presented in **Chapter 10: Commercial fisheries, Volume 2** of the ES **[APP-051]** and accompanying figures in **Chapter 10: Commercial fisheries - Figures, Volume 3** of the ES **[APP-083]**.

1.1.5   It is noted that in Hearing 1, discussion on this agenda item was focused on potting activity, and this is the focus of this note. This focus also reflects that fact that pots are the dominant fishing gear deployed in and around Rampion 1 and Rampion 2.
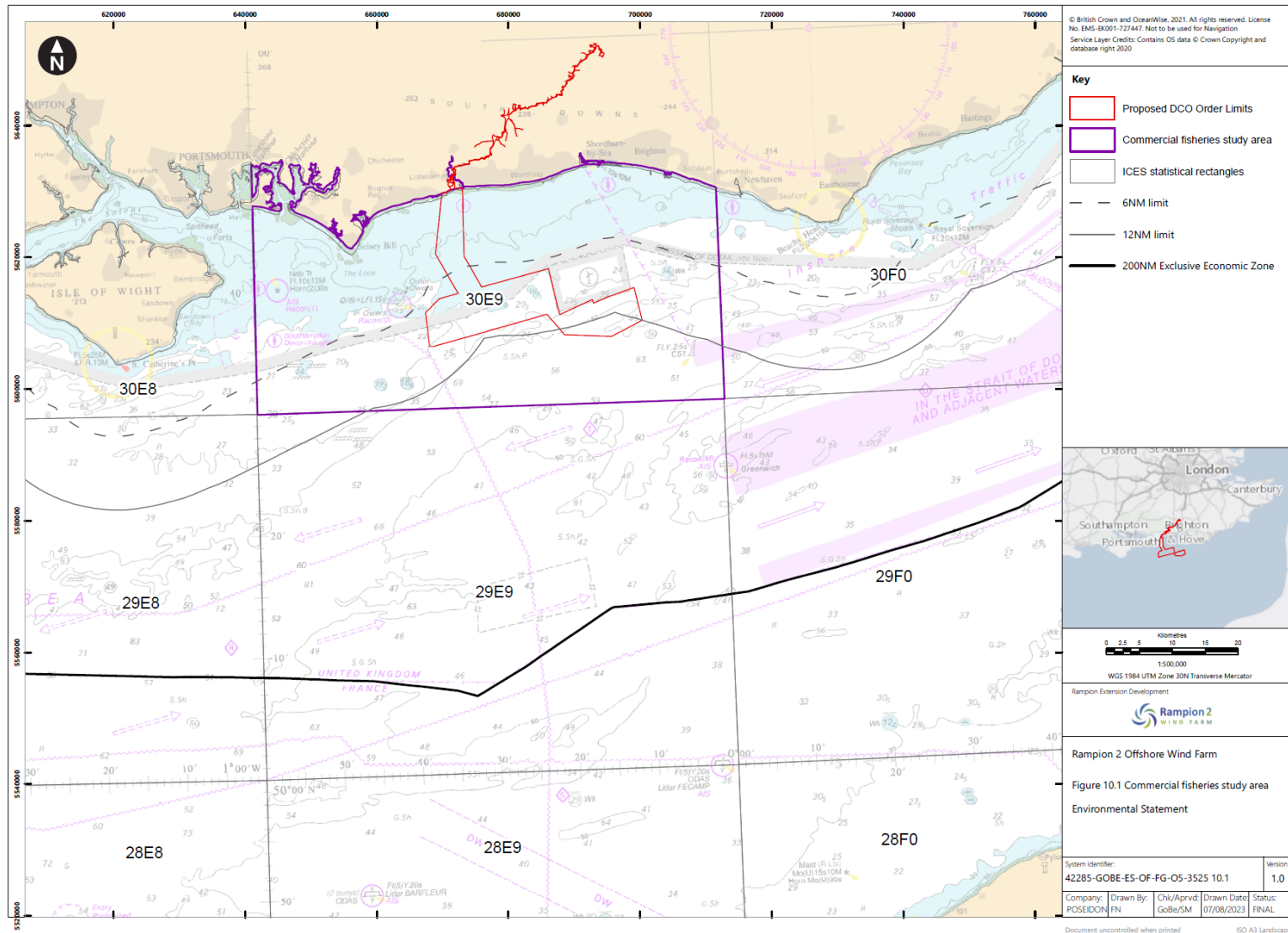
1.2 Potting activity trends

Landings statistics

Commercial fisheries study area

1.2.1   The Rampion 2 commercial fisheries Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Study Area is ICES rectangle 30E9 (**Figure 1.1**). This is inclusive of Rampion 1. Rampion 1 was in construction between February 2016 and April 2018, after which it became operational.

Figure 1.1   Rampion 2 commercial fisheries Study Area

1.2.2   Marine Management Organisation (MMO) annual landings statistics provide information on potting activity by vessels of all lengths (MMO, 2019; MMO, 2023).

1.2.3   Landings by potting vessels account for just over half of all landings from the study area by weight and just under half by value, based on long-term annual landings statistics.

1.2.4   General annual trends for ICES rectangle 30E9 indicate that across 2014 to 2022, the landed weight of catches by potting vessels (i.e. vessels fishing with pots and traps, primarily targeting shellfish species) has declined, whilst the value of landings has remained relatively consistent (**Figure 1.2**).

1.2.5   A relatively sharp decline in landings from 30E9 is observed in 2018 (decline in whelk landings primarily responsible), though landings show rebound following this (**Figure 1.3**).

Figure 1.2   Landed weight (tonnes) and value (GBP) by UK potting vessels from ICES rectangle 30E9 (Source: MMO, 2019; MMO, 2023)
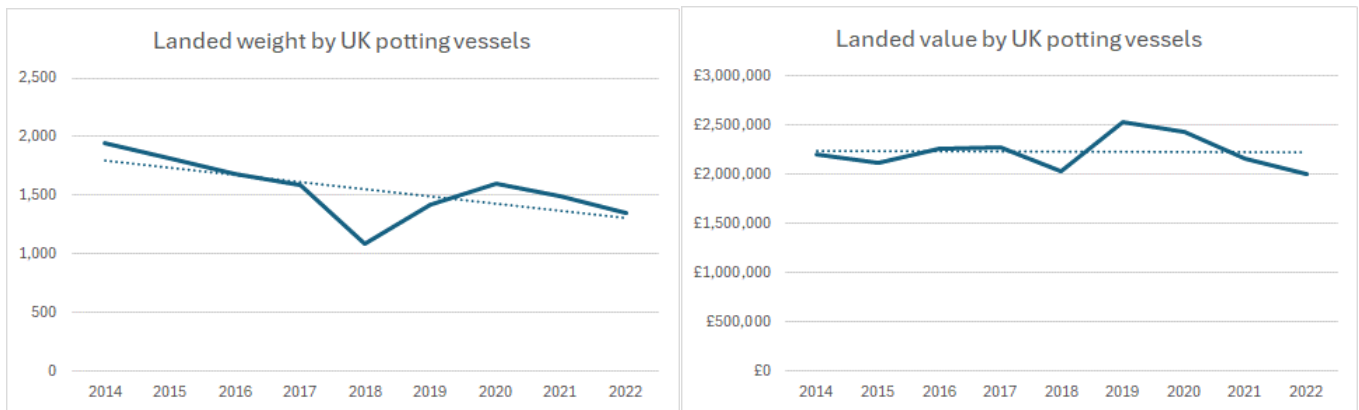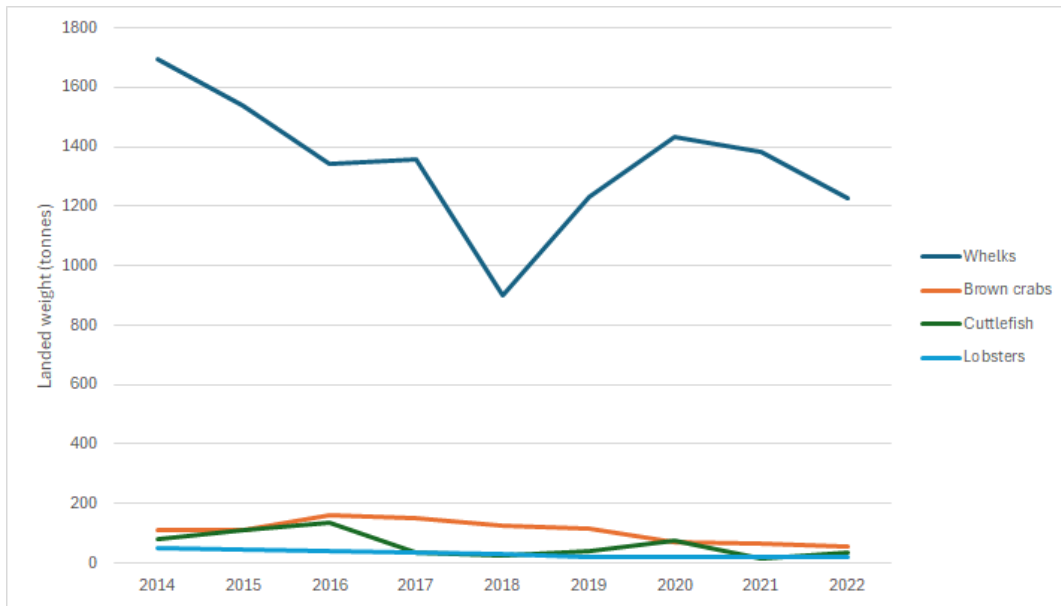
Figure 1.3   Landed weight (tonnes) by UK potting vessels from ICES rectangle 30E9 indicating species (Source: MMO, 2019; MMO, 2023)

Commercial fisheries study area and adjacent areas

1.2.6   Trends in landed weight in 30E9 show similar trend to those in adjacent ICES rectangles **(Figure 1.1**), with a notable spike in landings from ICES rectangle 30F0 (east of the study area) in 2020. Notably, ICES rectangles 30E8, 30E9 (study area) and 30F0 all show declines in landings from 2020 to 2022 (**Figure 1.4**).

Figure 1.4   Landed weight (tonnes) by UK potting vessels from ICES rectangles 30E8, 30E9 and 30F0 (Source: MMO, 2019; MMO, 2023)
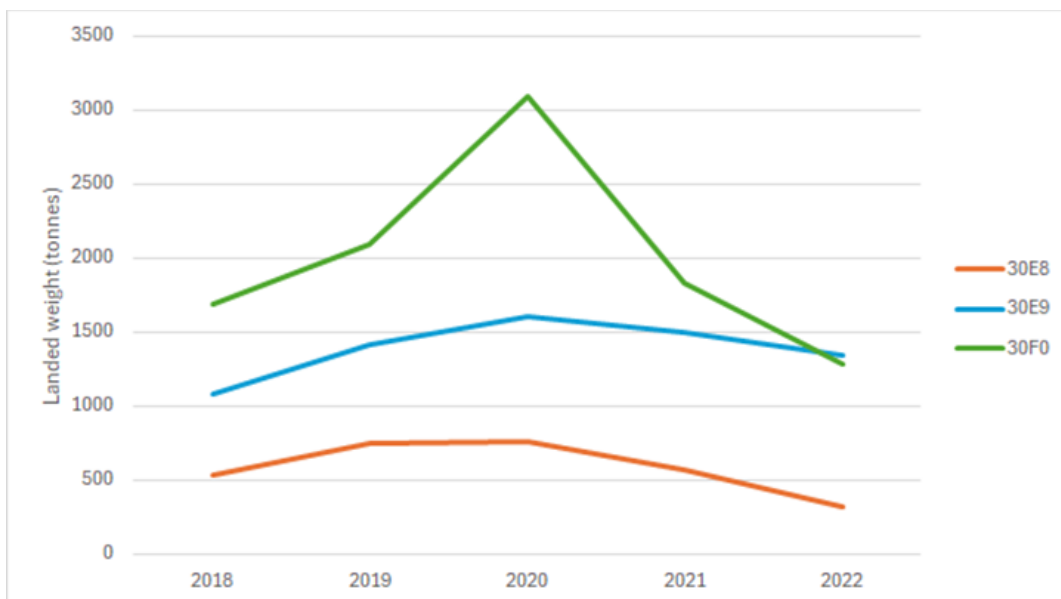
Winter potting activity

1.2.7 Across 2014 to 2022, higher landings by potting vessels are recorded in summer than in winter months based on both landed weight and landed value (**Figure 1.5**) - consistent with seasonal potting trends seen more widely in UK waters.

Figure 1.5   Average landed weight (tonnes) and value (GBP) by UK potting vessels from ICES rectangle 30E9 indicating month of landing (Source: MMO, 2019; MMO, 2023)
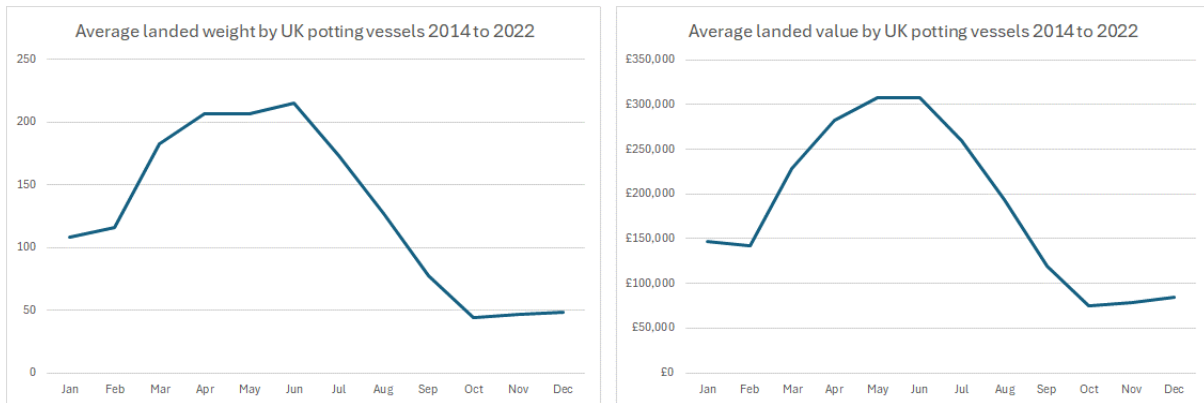
1.2.8 Rampion 1 became operational in 2018; there is a decline in winter and summer landings by potting vessels from 30E9 in this year, but landings rebound in subsequent years whilst Rampion 1 continues to be operational (**Figure 1.6**).

Figure 1.6   Landed weight (tonnes) by UK potting vessels from ICES rectangle 30E9 indicating trend for summer (June, July and August) and winter (December, January and February) months (Source: MMO, 2019; MMO, 2023)
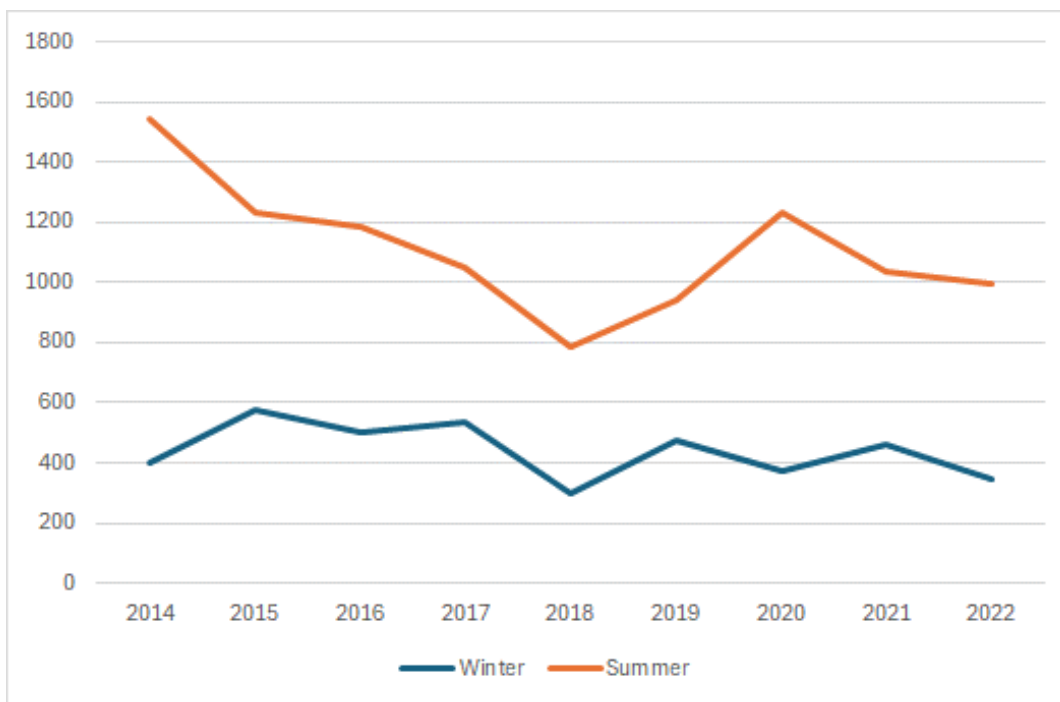
1.2.9   A more detailed analysis of landing statistics by month for the period 2016 to 2022 is provided in **Figure 1.7** for ICES rectangle 30E9 and, for comparison, for ICES rectangle 30F0 (to the east of Rampion 2), in **Figure 1.8**.

Figure 1.7   Landed weight (tonnes) by UK potting vessels from ICES rectangle 30E9 indicating trends for summer (June, July and August) and winter (December, January and February) months (Source: MMO, 2019; MMO, 2023)
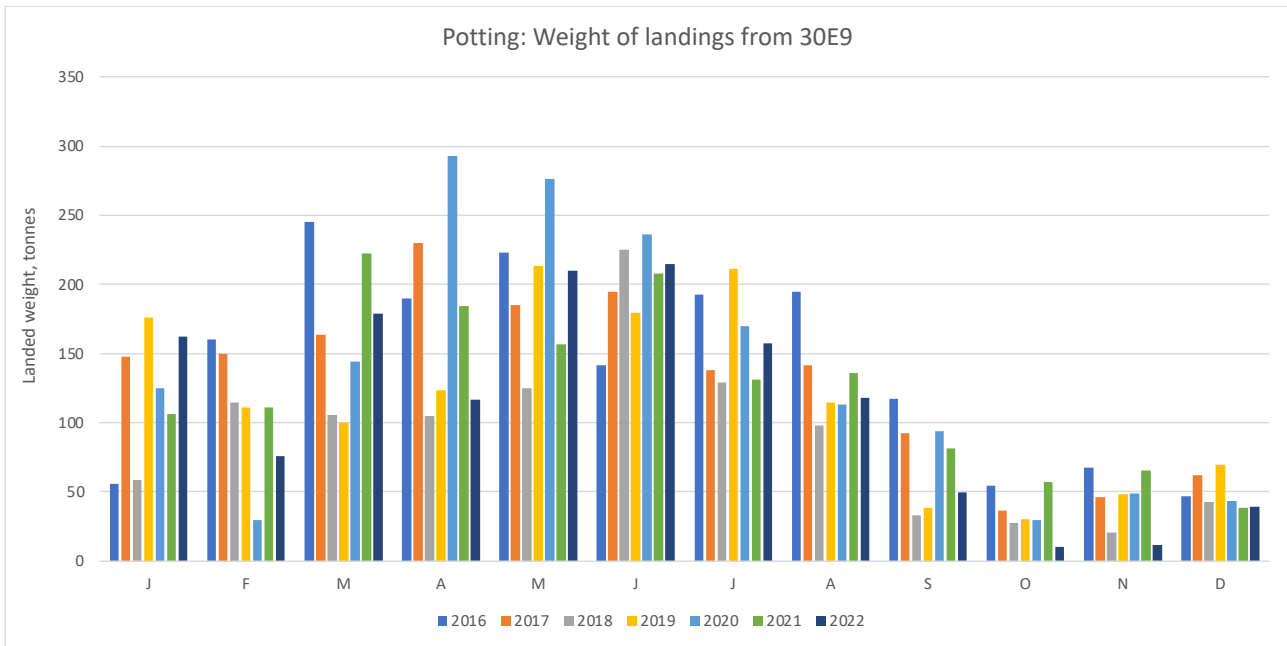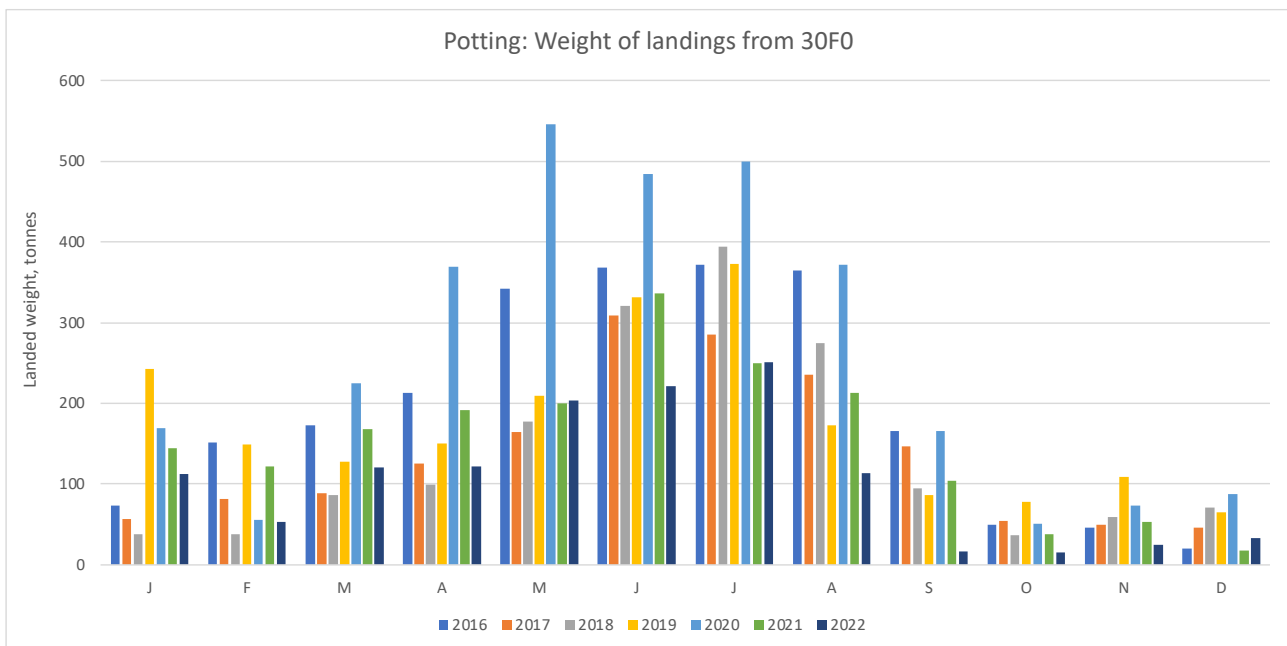

Figure 1.8   Landed weight (tonnes) by UK potting vessels from ICES rectangle 30E9 indicating trend for summer (June, July and August) and winter (December, January and February) months (Source: MMO, 2019; MMO, 2023)#

1.2.10   The landing statistics for ICES rectangle 30E9 indicate fluctuations in landings between years for the winter months:

- January: Landings drop from 2017 to 2018 (but 2018 levels are similar to those seen in 2016). Landings significantly increase in 2019, followed by a slight drop, but return to above 2017 levels in 2022;

- February: landings drop from 2017 to 2018, followed by a significant drop in 2020 (likely due to COVID-19 restrictions and Brexit), followed by a return to 2019 levels in 2021; and

- December: landings drop slightly from 2017 to 2018, but increase in 2019, followed by drop to 2018 levels from 2020 onwards.

1.2.11   In comparison, the landing statistics for ICES rectangle 30F0 also indicate fluctuations in landings between years for the winter months:

- January: shows a decrease from 2017 to 2018, followed by a marked increase in 2019. After which, landings gradually reduce from 2020 onwards;

- February: shows significant annual fluctuation without a clear pattern; and

- December: shows growth from 2016 to 2020, followed by marked drops in 2021 and 2022.

1.2.12   In general, it is evident that landings by potting vessels fluctuate every month and every year and this fluctuation is noted for ICES rectangle 30E9 and the adjacent ICES rectangle 30F0. These fluctuations occur for a range of reasons, including inclement weather, which will be a key contributor to the perception of risk when deciding whether to operate within a wind farm.

1.2.13   Importantly, the landing statistics indicate that the spring and summer months are the peak seasonal periods for landings by potting vessels.

1.3   Other fishing method activity trends

1.3.1   Other fishing gear types deployed in the Study Area, ICES rectangle 30E9, include drift and fixed nets, gears with hooks, scallop dredges, beam trawls and demersal otter trawls. Spatial data indicates that fishing vessels deploying these gears are less likely to be present in the Rampion 1 and Rampion 2 than vessels deploying pots.

1.3.2   Landings by vessels deploying drift and fixed nets display a gradual decline across the 2016 to 2022 period in ICES rectangle 30E9. Decline in landings is also observed in adjacent ICES rectangles 30E8 and 30F0. Landings by netting vessels show a seasonal pattern with consistent peaks in late spring and early autumn (**Figure 1.9**).

1.3.3   Landings by vessels deploying gears with hooks (in this case, handlines) display an increasing trend across the 2016 to 2022 period in ICES rectangle 30E9. The same trend, though less pronounced, is observed in adjacent ICES rectangles 30E8 and 30F0. Landings are taken year-round with a consistent peak in late spring and summer months (**Figure 1.10**).

1.3.4   Landings by vessels deploying dredges display an increasing trend across the 2016 to 2022 period in ICES rectangle 30E9. The same trend is observed in adjacent ICES rectangles 30E8 and 30F0. Landings show consistent peaks in winter and spring months (**Figure 1.11**).

1.3.5   Landings by vessels deploying beam trawls display a notable decline across the 2016 to 2022 period in ICES rectangle 30E9. Decline in landings is also observed in adjacent ICES rectangles 30E8 and 30F0. Landings show a consistent peak across summer months (**Figure 1.12**).

1.3.6   Landings by vessels deploying demersal otter trawls display a notable decline across the 2016 to 2022 period in ICES rectangle 30E9. Decline in landings is also observed in adjacent ICES rectangle 30F0 (very minimal landings are taken in rectangle 30E8). Landings are taken year-round, with significant peaks in winter months in some years, expected to reflect a single/small number of catches of large volume (**Figure 1.13**).

Figure 1.9   Landed weight (tonnes) by UK drift and fixed net vessels from ICES rectangle 30E9 indicating monthly trends (Source: MMO, 2019; MMO, 2023)
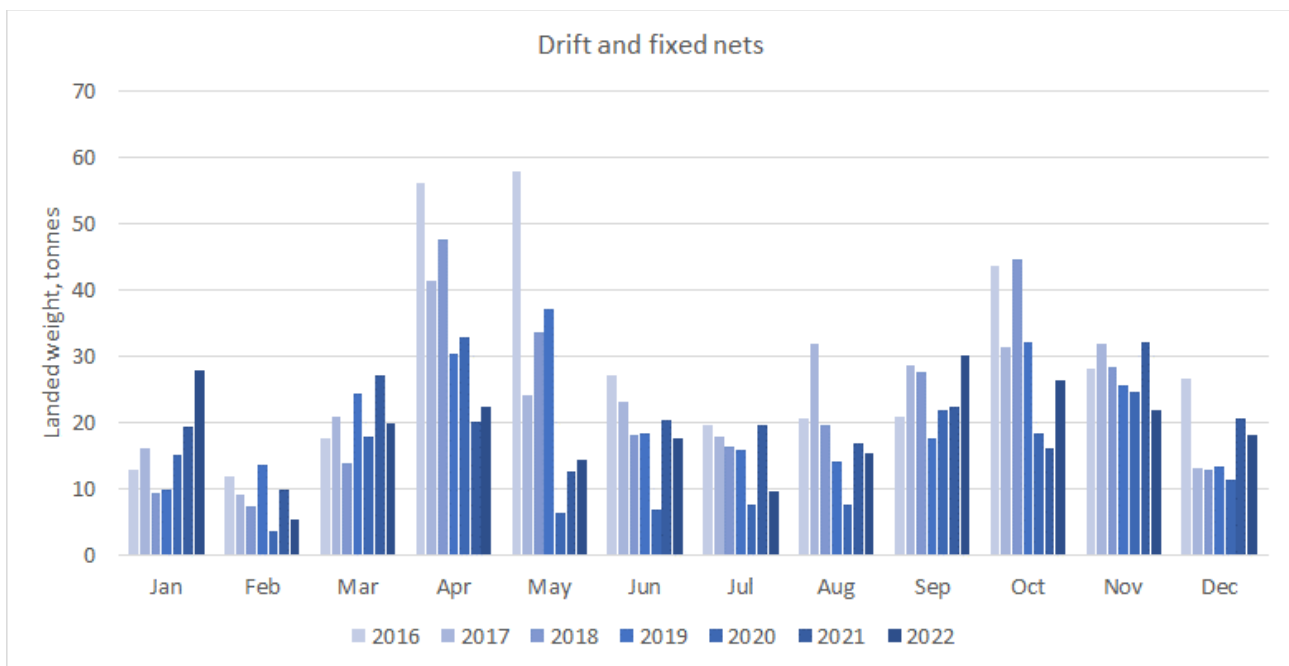
Figure 1.10 Landed weight (tonnes) by UK hooked gear vessels from ICES rectangle 30E9 indicating monthly trends (Source: MMO, 2019; MMO, 2023)
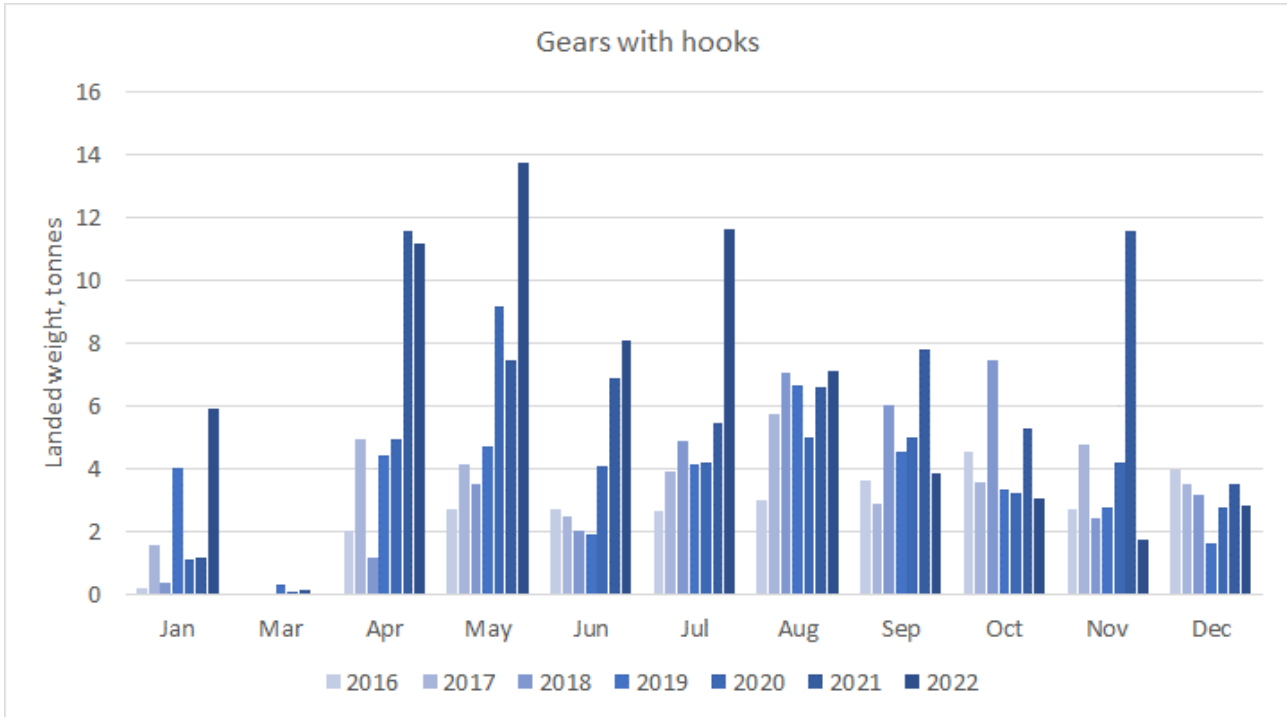

Figure 1.11 Landed weight (tonnes) by UK dredge vessels from ICES rectangle 30E9 indicating monthly trends (Source: MMO, 2019; MMO, 2023)
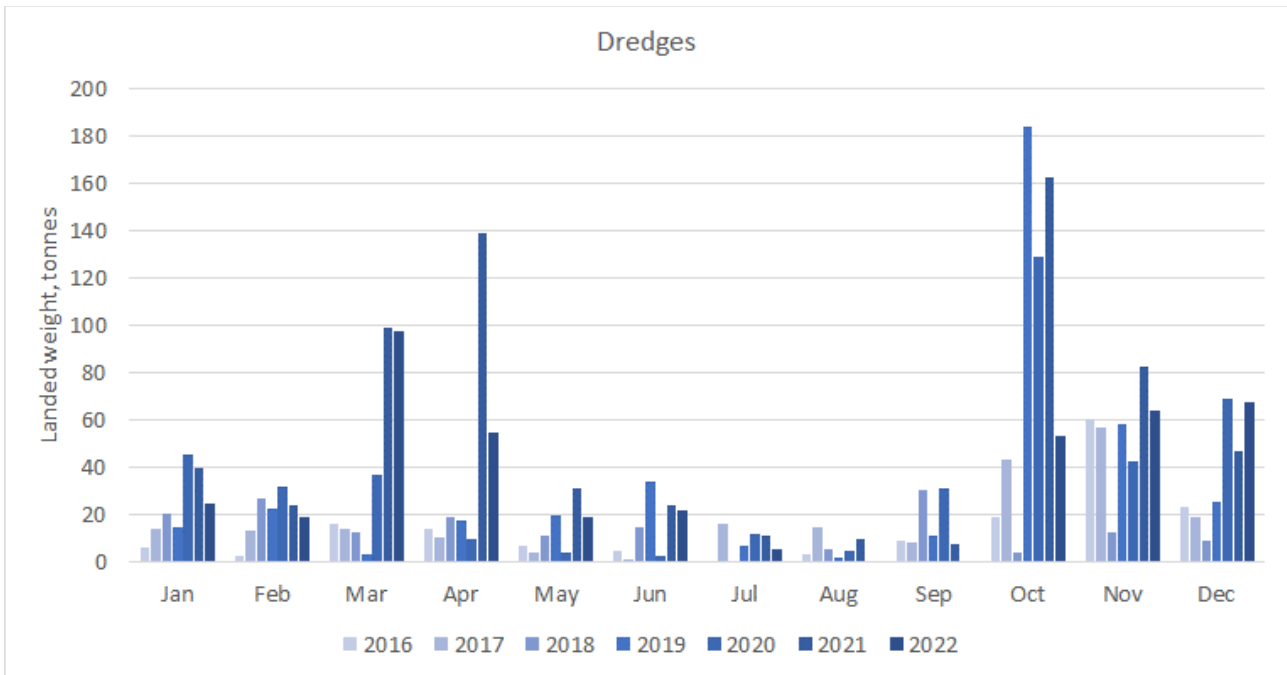
Figure 1.12 Landed weight (tonnes) by UK beam trawl vessels from ICES rectangle 30E9 indicating monthly trends (Source: MMO, 2019; MMO, 2023)
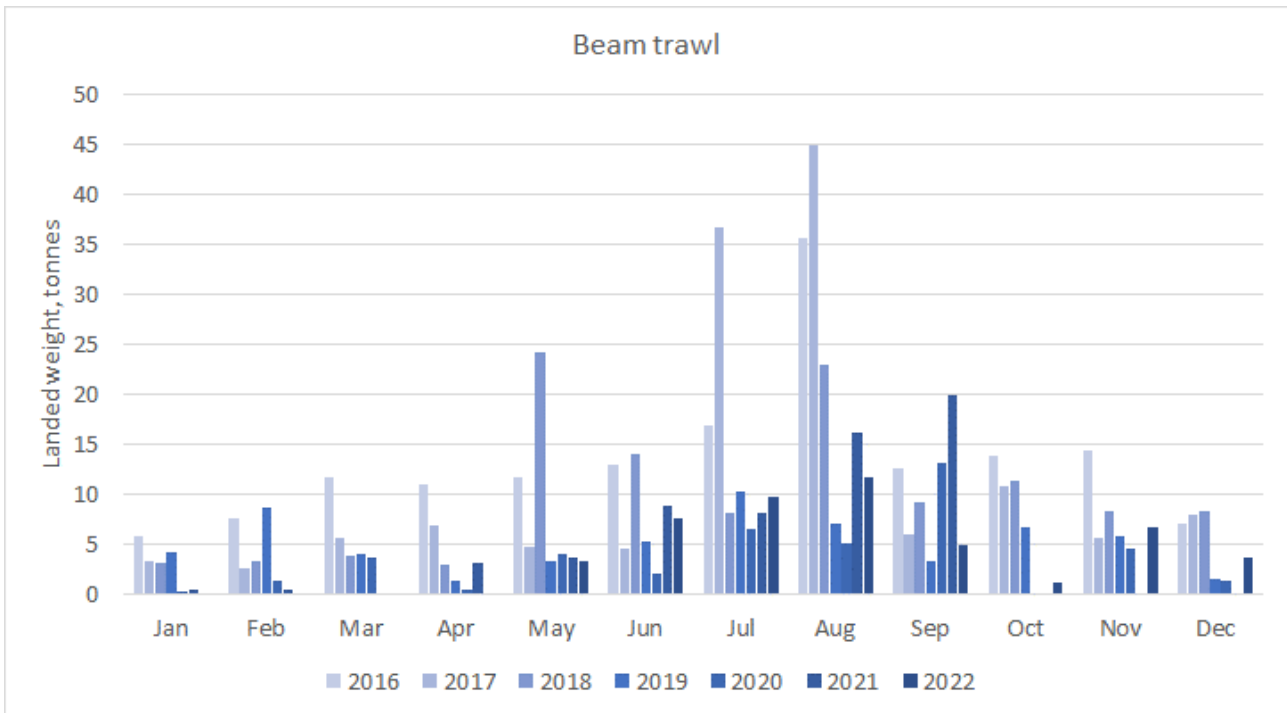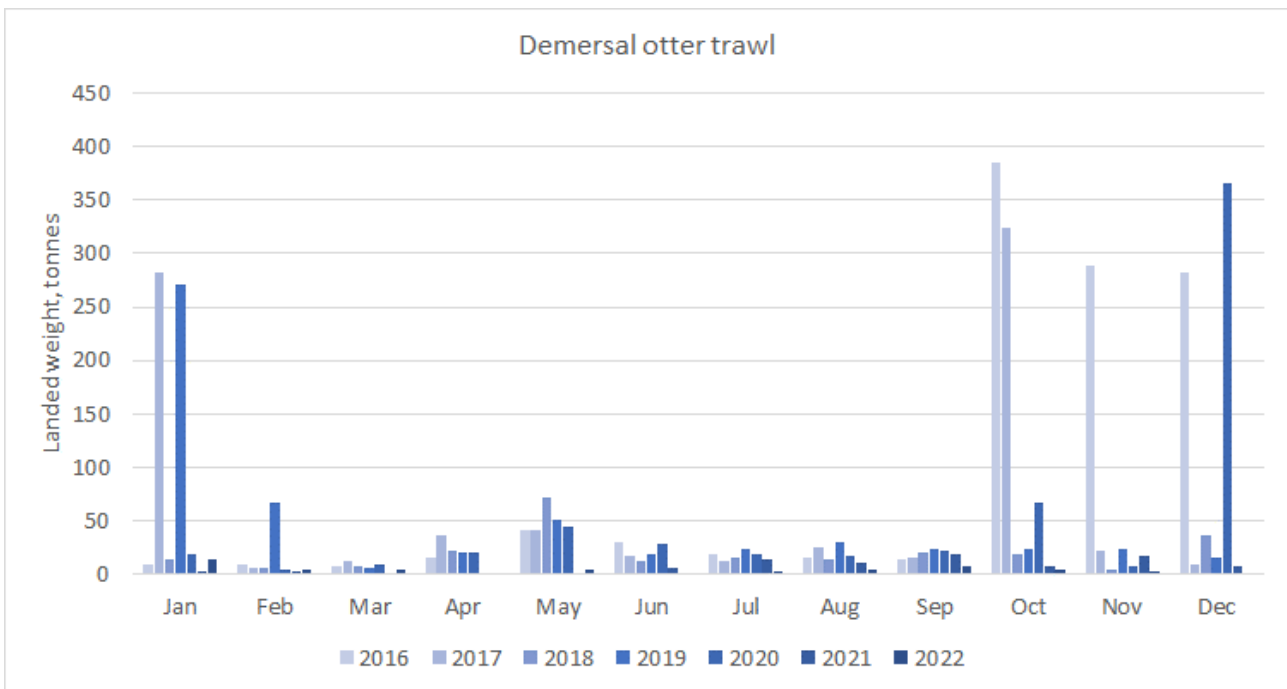

Figure 1.13 Landed weight (tonnes) by UK demersal trawl vessels from ICES rectangle 30E9 indicating monthly trends (Source: MMO, 2019; MMO, 2023)

1.4 Automatic Identification System data

1.4.1 Automatic Identification System (AIS) data for fishing vessels in 2021 (**Figure 1.14**) and 2022 (**Figure 1.15**) indicates that most fishing vessels tend to avoid Rampion 1 during the winter months, noting however that this data is specific to those vessels with AIS devices on board (required for vessels 15m and over). The majority of potting vessels are less than 15m in length and therefore not necessarily represented in this dataset (unless the vessel actively choses to carry AIS).

1.4.2 The AIS data described immediately above corresponds to the results of Rampion 2 marine traffic surveys, which are described in **Chapter 13: Shipping and navigation, Volume 2** of the ES **[APP-054]** and **Chapter 13: Shipping and navigation – Figures, Volume 3** of the ES **[APP-086]** (**Figure 1.16** and **Figure 1.17**), which depict less fishing vessel activity in Rampion 1 in winter than in summer.

1.5 Summary

1.5.1 Marine traffic data indicates that fishing vessels display lower levels of activity in Rampion 1 during winter. It is expected that this is reflective of the effect of inclement weather during winter and associated vessel skipper perception of risk when deciding whether to operate within the wind farm.

1.5.2 Fisheries landings statistics indicate that there is a long-term pattern of potting vessel landings peaking in summer months and being less in winter months. This trend is observed not only in the Rampion 2 commercial fisheries study area, but also in adjacent ICES rectangles. This trend is observed consistently from 2014 to 2022, thus covering the period prior to, during and following the construction of Rampion 1 and during the ongoing operation of Rampion 1.

1.5.3 Overall trends in landings by potting vessels from the Rampion 2 study area, within which Rampion 1 is located, show a long-term decline in the landed weight of catches whilst the value of landings has remained relatively consistent over the period 2014 to 2022. Again, this trend is consistent with trends in landings for adjacent ICES rectangles. This trend is observed relatively consistently from 2014 to 2022, thus covering the period prior to, during and following the construction of Rampion 1 and during the ongoing operation of Rampion 1.

1.5.4 Trends in landings for other fishing methods have been summarised. As for potting, trends in landings in the Rampion 2 study area are consistent with trends in landings for adjacent ICES rectangles.

1.6 Relevant Commitments

1.6.1 The Applicant is committed to applying the Final Fisheries Liaison and Co-existence Plan throughout the lifetime of Rampion 2. The FLCP will be reviewed regularly and updated if necessary to ensure co-existence remains a priority.

Figure 1.14 AIS (2021) data for fishing vessels indicating the route density for vessels in transit and actively fishing. Data is not representative for vessels without AIS (Source: EMSA, 2023)
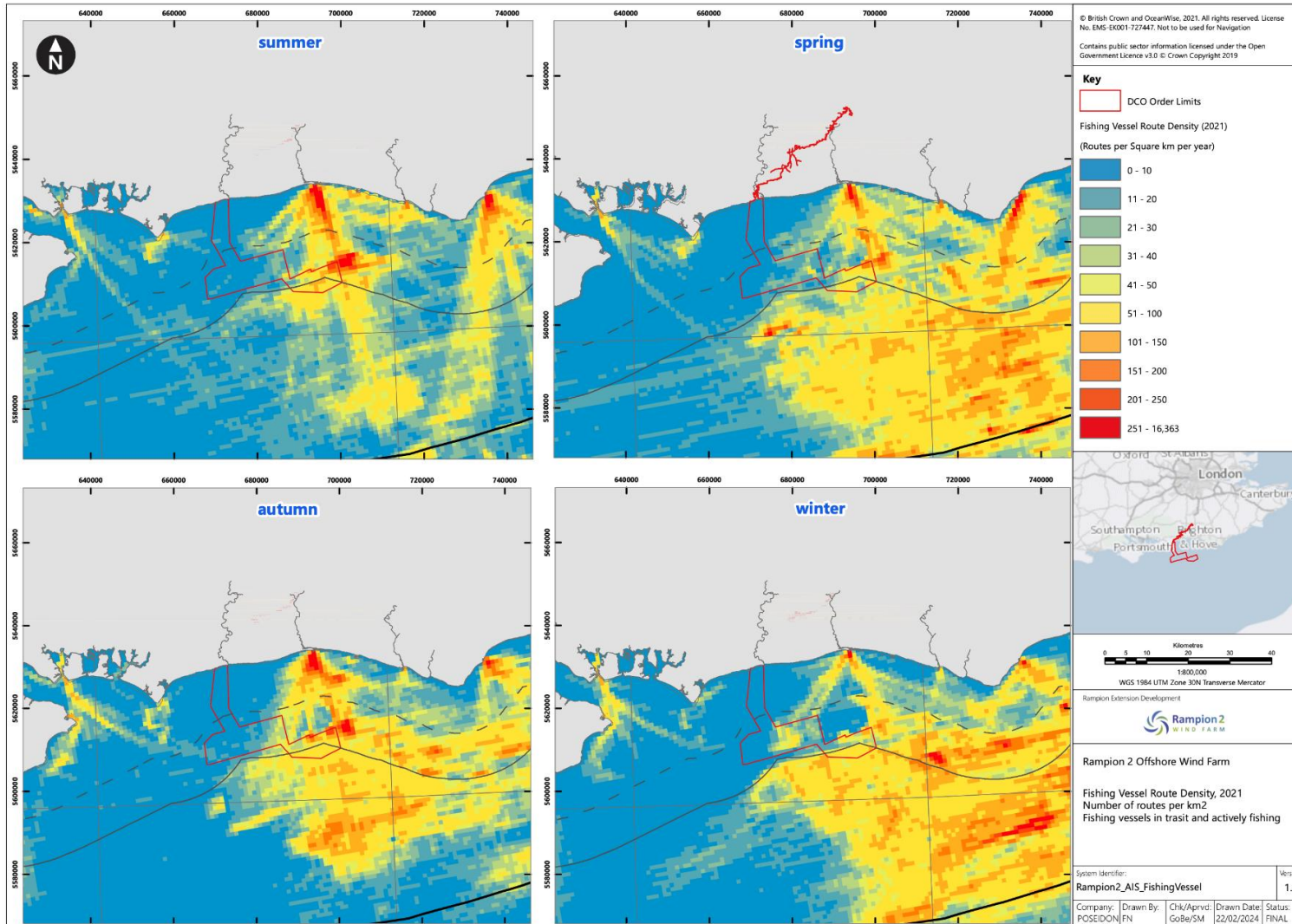
Figure 1.15 AIS (2022) data for fishing vessels indicating the route density for vessels in transit and actively fishing. Data is not representative for vessels without AIS (Source: EMSA, 2023)
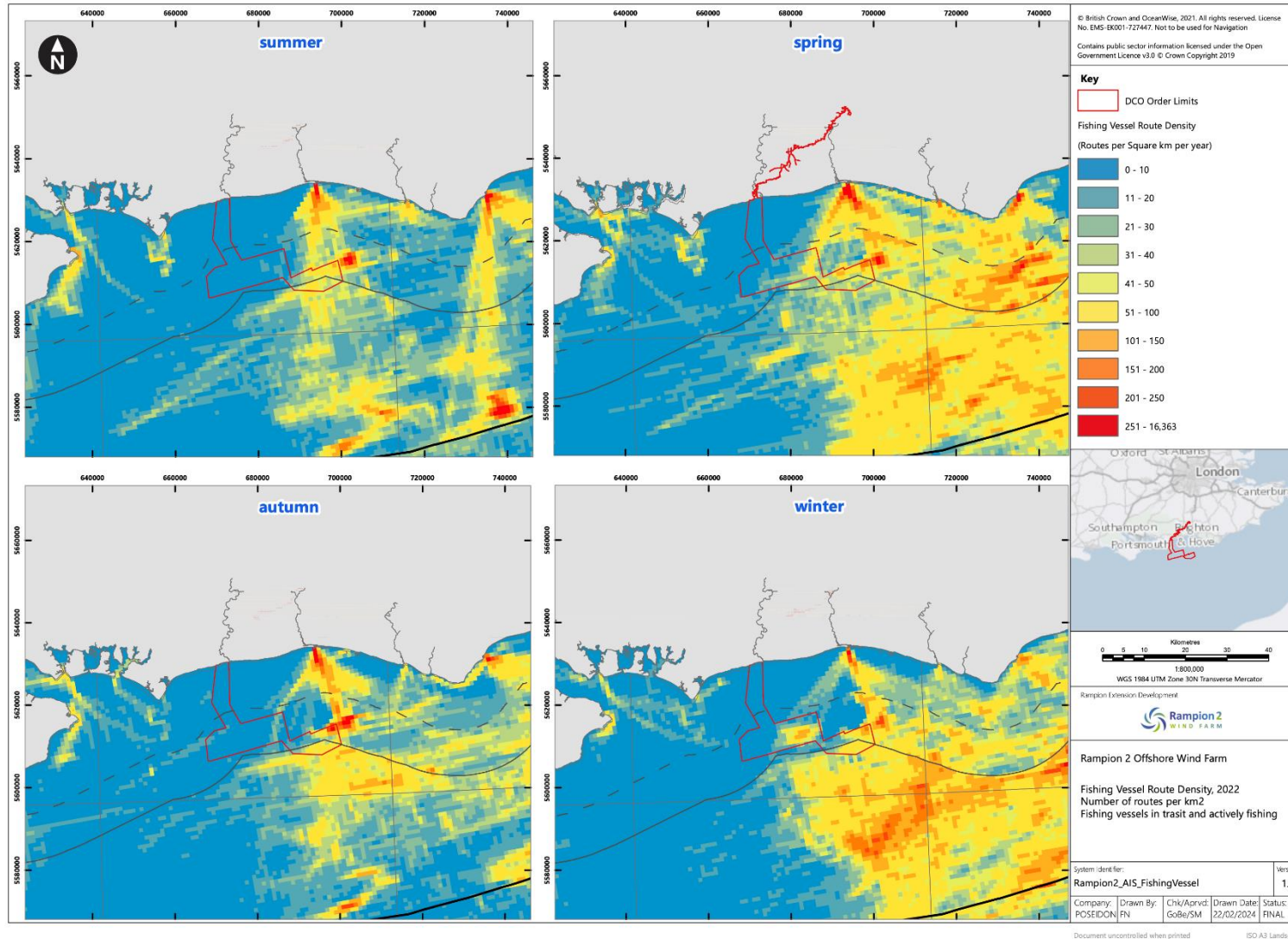
Figure 1.16 Summer vessel traffic survey data by vessel type (Source: Chapter 10: Shipping and Navigation, Doc Ref 6.3.13)
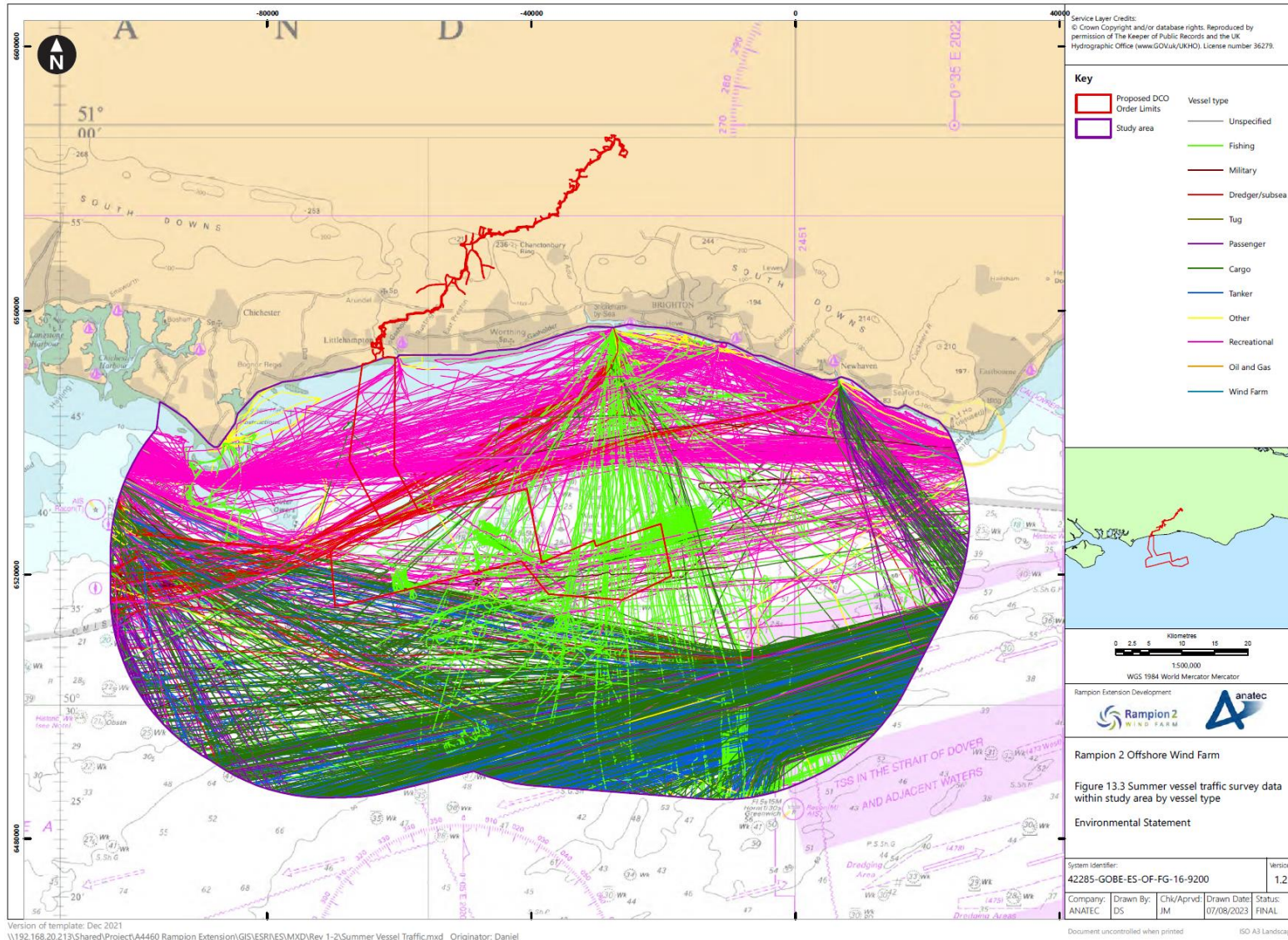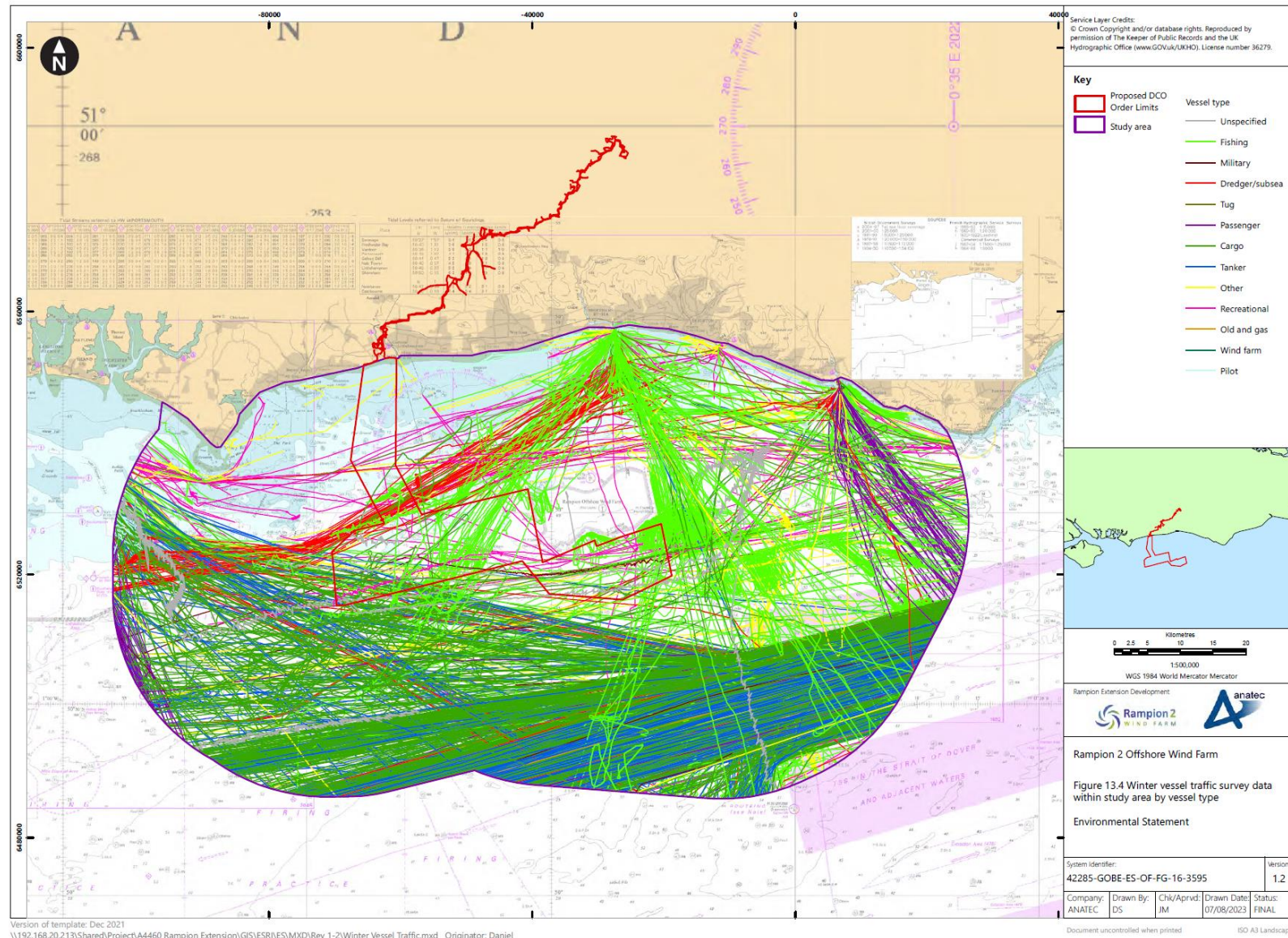
Figure 1.17 Winter vessel traffic survey data by vessel type (Source: Chapter 10: Shipping and Navigation, Doc Ref 6.3.13)

2. References

European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA), (2023). *EU AIS data for fishing vessels indicating route density for vessels actively fishing and in transit.* EMSA; Lisbon.

Marine Management Organisation (MMO), (2019). *IFISH database with landing statistics data for UK registered vessels for 2014 to 2018 with attributes for: landing year; landing month; vessel length category; country code; ICES rectangle; vessel/gear type; species; live weight (tonnes); and value; and landing year; landing month; vessel length category; country code; vessel/gear type; port of landing; species; live weight (tonnes); and value.* MMO; Newcastle upon Tyne.

Marine Management Organisation (MMO), (2023). *IFISH database with landing statistics data for UK registered vessels for 2018 to 2022 with attributes for: landing year; landing month; vessel length category; country code; ICES rectangle; vessel/gear type; species; live weight (tonnes); and value; and landing year; landing month; vessel length category; country code; vessel/gear type; port of landing; species; live weight (tonnes); and value.* MMO; Newcastle upon Tyne.