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Dear Nick,

**MSS Acceptance of the Beatrice Offshore Wind Farm January 2016 Pre-construction Baseline Herring Larval Survey – Technical Report and of the February 2016 Pre-construction Baseline Herring Larval Surveys Summary Technical Report**

Thank you for sight of second year (January 2016) Pre-Construction Baseline Herring Larval Survey – Technical Report and Summary Technical Report.

The January 2016 technical report seems to be complete, of good quality and is consistent with the December 2014 technical report. The Summary Report sets out a clear comparison between the two years with consideration given to the relevant consent conditions and argues that no herring mitigation will be required for piling activities.

In a meeting held between BOWL and MSS on the 3rd July 2015 it was acknowledged that the December 2014 technical report setting out the methods and results of BOWL's pre-construction herring larval surveys, completed in August and September 2014, had been accepted by MSS and MS-LOT. The surveys strongly indicated that peak spawning takes place in the first two weeks of September, and occurs to the north of the Wind Farm off Orkney and Shetland (well outside the potential impact area of pile-driving noise).

At this meeting, BOWL queried whether it could be assumed that mitigation for spawning herring during piling operations would not be required should the results from the 2015 herring surveys resemble those of the 2014 surveys, i.e. that herring spawn off Orkney and Shetland and therefore outside the area of potential noise impact from the wind farm. MSS confirmed that this assumption is accurate, and that if this is the case mitigation would not be required.

The January 2016 technical report which sets out the methods and results of BOWLs pre-construction larval surveys, completed in August and September 2015, also indicates that peak spawning period (in respect to hatching larvae) occurs in the first two weeks of September, also out with the potential impact area of pile-driving noise.

As a result of the survey work undertaken, MSS would like to formally confirm acceptance of these reports and accepts that the evidence shows that the main herring spawning grounds, as identified by the surveys, are at some distance beyond the area of potential effect from piling noise. It is therefore concluded that the planned piling installation activities will not adversely impact spawning of the Orkney- Shetland herring stock.

Yours sincerely,



Adrian Tait  
Marine Scotland - Science

cc: Nicola Bain (MS-LOT)