

THE CONSERVATION (NATURAL HABITAT, &c.) REGULATIONS 1994 (AS AMENDED)

LICENCE TO DISTURB MARINE SPECIES

Public Case Handling Report for Licence Number: EPS-00011485

Site	Aberdeen Bay Offshore Windfarm
Company	Aberdeen Offshore Wind Farm Limited Unit 6 , Commercial Quay, Aberdeen, United Kingdom, AB11 5PH
Brief Description of Project	
Associated Licences	

Species	harbour porpoise (<i>Phocoena phocoena</i>);bottlenose dolphin (<i>Tursiops truncatus</i>);minke whale (<i>Balaenoptera acutorostrata</i>);Risso's dolphin (<i>Grampus griseus</i>);white sided dolphin (<i>Lagenorhynchus acutus</i>);short beaked common dolphin (<i>Delphinus delphis</i>);white-beaked dolphin (<i>Lagenorhynchus albirostris</i>);humpback whale (<i>Megaptera novaeangliae</i>);long-finned pilot whale (<i>Globicephala melas</i>)
Inshore/Offshore	Inshore

TEST 1	Purpose of licence
	Imperative reasons of overriding public interest (including those of a social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment)
Comments	
<p>The proposed geophysical survey activities are essential to obtain site-specific data required for offshore inspection and maintenance of the European Offshore Wind Deployment Centre and Export Cable Corridors benefiting the public socioeconomically and contributing towards national climate change policies. The project delivering long-term environmental benefits and significantly reducing carbon emissions, aiding the Scottish Government's transition to net zero. In line with GEN 1 of Scotland's National Marine Plan, the development supports sustainable development and use of the marine environment. European Offshore Wind Deployment Centre provides economic and social benefit by supporting the local community, providing employment through the supply chain which covers GEN 2 & GEN 3 of Scotland's National Marine Plan. As European Offshore Wind Deployment Centre is generating renewable energy it directly contributes to GEN 5 of Scotland's National Marine Plan. Consideration has also been given to GEN 9, with mitigation measures such as the EPS strategy designed to limit impacts on marine habitats and species, The purpose of the geophysical surveys is to provide up-to-date understanding of seabed conditions across the Wind Farm site and Export Cable Corridor for the European Offshore Wind Deployment Centre. The expected duration of the individual work is short with periods expected to be approximately 17 days with a total of one survey required per year. Weather and technical downtime have been excluded from the 17 day total but are not anticipated to exceed 34 days. The survey vessel will not be operating 24 hours per day. The applicant is not undertaking a statutory function.</p>	
Test 1 satisfied?	YES

TEST 2	Satisfactory alternatives
Comments	
<p>The proposed geophysical survey activities are essential to obtain an understanding of seabed conditions for inspection and maintenance activities across the wind farm site and export cable corridor. This ensuring the wind farm integrity is maintained in good condition and faults can be identified early. Survey Location & Timing – The survey will take place periodically at Aberdeen Bay Offshore Wind Farm. The wind farm is operational and the survey can not be carried out in an alternate location as it would not allow for the inspection of the subsea installations or export cable corridor in order to maintain their integrity. Equipment – There are alternative equipment options available however they would still be required to use the same frequencies in order to carry out the required inspection and maintenance works. Suitable Alternatives – The applicant has identified that not carrying out the work could have both economic and environmental consequences, and potential health and safety effects on other sea users. The reasoning due to the integrity of the subsea installation and export cable corridor not being maintained. There would also be a possibility of loss of equipment (such as remotely operated vehicles) due to not using the USBL/Transponders for tracking purposes.</p>	
Test 2 satisfied?	YES

TEST 3	Favourable conservation status
Comments	
NatureScot concluded that there would not be an impact on the Favourable Conservation Status of the listed EPS provided the adherence to the mitigation measures including the JNCC 2017 guidance, the Scottish Marine Wildlife Watching Code, and that a soft start procedure is used	
Test 3 satisfied?	YES

Date application received:

Consultation start date: 13/11/2025

Consultation end date:

Notes

Date	title	Text
------	-------	------

National Marine Plan considerations:

The decision is: In accordance and no further action required
Comments: The impact of the proposed survey on Scotland's National Marine Plan has been considered by the applicant. Specific general policies taken into consideration include GEN 1, GEN 2, GEN 3, GEN 5 and GEN 9

Date document generated: 17/12/2025