



Northern  
Lighthouse  
Board

## MARINE LICENCE APPLICATION

Northern Lighthouse Board  
Bell Rock Access Walkway



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**MARINE LICENCE APPLICATION**  
**Northern Lighthouse Board**  
**Regional Licence for Bell Rock Access Walkway**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

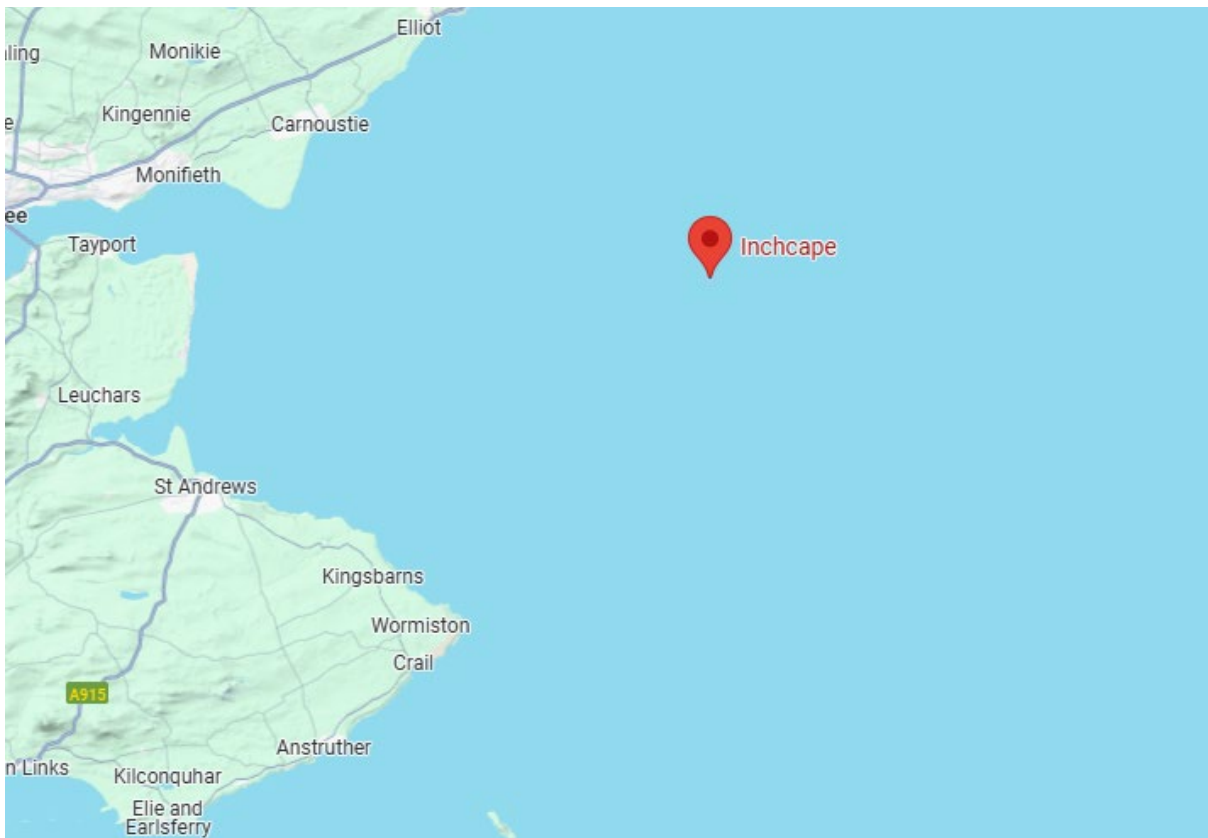
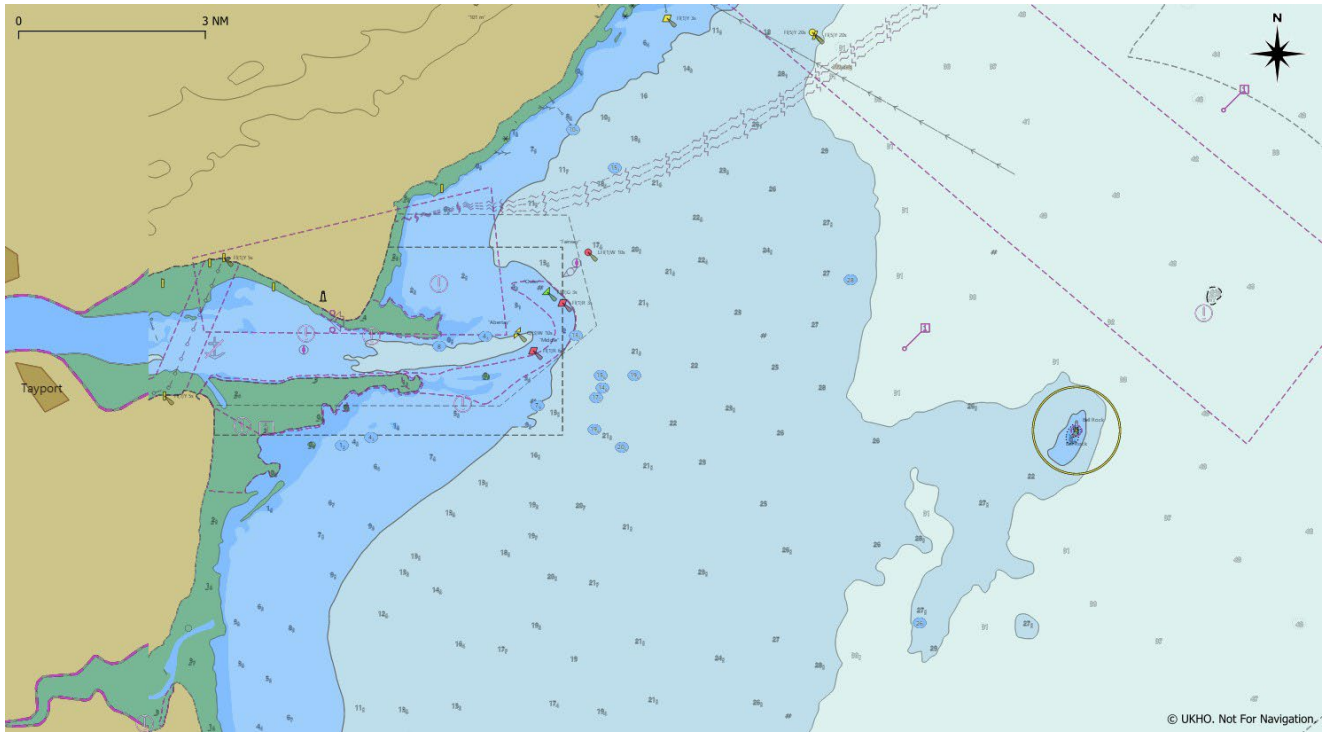
The Commissioners of Northern Lighthouses are appointed as the General Lighthouse Authority for Scotland and its adjacent seas and islands, in addition to the Isle of Man. We are vested with responsibility for the superintendence and management of all associated lighthouses, buoys and beacons. We have provided a vital safety service to mariners since 1786 and are responsible for the superintendence and management of all lights, buoys and beacons within Scottish and Isle of Man waters. Our service makes a significant contribution to the prevention of accidents and incidents around the coastline, safeguarding not only lives and property, but also protecting our precious marine environment.

We currently operate and maintain 206 lighthouses and 170 buoys as well as providing radio aids to navigation (AtoN). We are also responsible for ensuring other AtoN providers in our area, such as port authorities, are conforming to international standards. We operate two ships NLV PHAROS and NLV POLE STAR. The ships carry out buoy work, deliver stores and supplies to lighthouses and inspect navigation aids on oil and gas rigs in the Scottish sector.

The access walkway to the Bell Rock Lighthouse is situated at least partly below Mean High Water Springs (MHWS) and therefore a marine licence is required for their maintenance.

Following correspondence with Marine Scotland on 21<sup>st</sup> January 2025, it is proposed that NLB applies for a regional licences cover maintenance to the Bell I Rock Access walkway in need of repair.

# Bell Rock Location





PHOTOGRAPHS



Missing Walkway Gratings





New Walkway sections fabricated from Mild Steel at NLB Oban Depot

## MARINE POLICY STATEMENT AND THE SCOTTISH NATIONAL MARINE PLAN

The works proposed do not generally impact on any of the policies outlined in Scotland's National Marine Plan, other than in supporting Section 3: Key issues for marine planning, and Section 13 Part 1; Objectives and marine planning policies, in regard to Objective 1: "Safeguarded access to ports and harbours and navigational safety".

It should be noted also that the Northern Lighthouse Board's main remit is to ensure that Aids to Navigation (AToNs) are maintained with the aim to: "Deliver a reliable, efficient and cost-effective Aids to Navigation service for the benefit and safety of all Mariners"

The works proposed do not constitute any new development but relate to the operation and maintenance of existing infrastructure and are consistent with Scotland's National Marine Plan ('SNMP'). The licensable activity which would be permitted by the proposed licence is low impact maintenance activity and is sustainable use of the marine environment which is consistent with the policies and objectives of the SNMP (GEN 1 'general planning principle').

The proposed maintenance activities provide the social benefit of a functioning Aid to Navigation service, promoting health and wellbeing that benefits not only coastal communities but also those who travel to and use the marine and coastal environment (GEN 3 'social benefit').

'Landscape and seascape are important elements of people's enjoyment of the coastal and marine environment. They are also important as the setting for coastal communities, contributing to sense of place, economic livelihoods and quality of life.' (GEN 7 'landscape/seascape'). It is not envisaged that the proposed maintenance activities would develop, change or adversely impact the landscape character and visual amenity of the site, as no new development is proposed as part of this marine licence application.

We have reviewed the site included in this application for a regional marine licence to identify sites that are located within 2km of a Protected Area. The site lies close to both the Outer Firth of Forth and St Andrews Bay Complex (SPA) and the Firth of Forth Bank Complex (MPA). The proposed maintenance activities in this application will not impact the legally protected areas and species in the marine environment.

The proposed maintenance activities should not result in a deterioration of the quality of water (GEN 12 'Water quality and resource'). The maintenance activities do not involve any new pathways that might introduce marine non-native species (MNNS) (GEN 10 'Invasive non-native species'). The proposed activities will not result in additional marine litter (GEN 11 'Marine litter') (see Method Statements).

As the proposed activities are low impact, there will not be any significant adverse effects of man-made noise and vibration in the marine environment (GEN 13 'Noise'). The maintenance activities proposed for the site in this regional marine licence application would not have a significant cumulative impact that would outweigh the benefit of the activities (GEN 21 'Cumulative impacts'). These are low impact activities that are essential to maintain our Aids to Navigation for the benefit and safety of all Mariners.