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Non-Statutory Consultee Representations

Aberdeen Airport

Aberdeen International Airport

Aberdeen International Airport Limited
Dyce, Aberdeen
AB21 7DU
Scotland

T: +44 (0)870 040 0006
W: aberdeenairport.com

FAO Abby Gray
Marine Directorate
Licensing Operations Team
Scottish Government

Via Email

ABZ Ref: ABZ3398

22nd June 2026

Dear Abby

MD-00012075 & MD-00012076 - Bowdun Offshore Wind Farm Limited - Bowdun Offshore Wind Farm - EIA Section 36 Consent and Marine Licence Application

I refer to your consultation request received in this office on 7th May 2026.

The proposed development has been examined from an aerodrome safeguarding perspective and could conflict with safeguarding criteria. Accordingly, a more detailed assessment requires to be undertaken regarding the potential impact on Aberdeen Airport.

Whilst every effort will be made to reply as soon as possible, we may not be able to reply within 21 days of receipt of your consultation request. We, therefore, submit a holding objection until we are able to advise you of the results of our investigations.

You should note that where a Planning Authority proposes to grant permission against the advice of Aberdeen Airport, it shall notify Aberdeen Airport, the Civil Aviation Authority and the Scottish Ministers as per Circular 2/2003: Town and Country Planning (Safeguarded Aerodromes, Technical Sites and Military Explosives Storage Areas) (Scotland) Direction 2003.

Yours Sincerely

[Redacted]

Kirsteen MacDonald

Safeguarding Manager
Aberdeen Airport
[Redacted]
abzsafeguard@aiairport.com

BT

From:	radionetworkprotection@bt.com
To:	MD Marine Renewables
Cc:	**[Redacted]**
Subject:	RE: WID14334 MD-00012075 & MD-00012076 - Bowdun Offshore Wind Farm Limited - Bowdun Offshore Wind Farm - EIA Section 36 Consent and Marine Licence Application - Consultation - Response Required by 19 June 2026
Date:	29 May 2026 14:37:15
Attachments:	image001.png image002.png

General

OUR REF: WID14334 & PREV WID13566

Thank you for your email.

We have restudied this proposal with respect to EMC and related problems to BT point-to-point microwave radio links.

We concluded that the proposed should not cause interference to BT's current or planned radio network. Our original response stands to the offshore structures and there appears to be no new structures onshore. If there are any we have missed please confirm and we will reassess the proposal.

BT requires 100m minimum clearance from any structure at height to the radio link path. It should be noted that this decision is for the date of its issue, includes no micro-siting, as the use of the spectrum is dynamic and can change on an ongoing basis. Therefore, please reconsult us if there are any changes during the planning process with heights and locations of any structures, and its finalisation, as we may have new links assigned by Ofcom over its duration.

Please note this refers to BT Radio Links only, you will need to contact other providers separately for information relating to other supplier links / equipment.

Please direct all queries to radionetworkprotection@bt.com

Kind Regards

[Redacted]

National Radio Planner
Radio & Satellite Platforms
Specialist Platforms, BT Networks

Dee District Salmon Fishery Board

Dee District Salmon Fishery Board

Marine Directorate
Marine Licensing and Consenting
Scottish Government
Marine Laboratory
Aberdeen
AB11 9DB

By email to MD.MarineRenewables@gov.scot
19th June 2026

Dear MD Team,

Bowdun Offshore Wind Farm Limited - Bowdun Offshore Wind Farm - EIA Section 36 Consent and Marine Licence Application – Consultation Response Request.

On behalf of the Dee District Salmon Fishery Board (Dee DSFB) we welcome the opportunity to respond to the Bowdun Offshore Wind Farm Limited - EIA Section 36 consent and Marine Licence Application Consultation Request.

Designations & Conservation Status - Atlantic Salmon

As a statutory body charged with the protection of Atlantic salmon and sea trout stocks within its district, the Dee DSFB has a duty to ensure that there are no significant adverse impacts upon the populations of these species.

The Dee has been designated as a Special Area of Conservation under the EC Habitats Directive 92/43 EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Flora and Fauna for Atlantic salmon (the principal species for which it receives this designation).

The International Union for Conservation of Nature's (IUCN) latest Red List of Threatened Species (December 2023) reclassified Atlantic salmon from 'Least Concern' to 'Endangered' in Great Britain because of a 30-50% decline in British populations since 2006 and 50-80% projected between 2010-2025. The Scottish Government has released a Scottish Wild Salmon Strategy which calls on government agencies, as well as the private sector, to prioritise the protection and recovery of Scotland's wild Atlantic salmon populations.

Salmon and many other key species of diadromous fish have also been identified as Priority Marine Features and UKBAP Priority Species.

Designations & Conservation Status - Other Species

The Dee District also supports populations of trout, eels and brook, river and sea lampreys.

Sea trout, common to all the rivers within the Dee District, are a priority species under the United Kingdom's Biodiversity Action Plan (UKBAP).

All lamprey species are protected under the EC Habitats Directive whilst river and sea lampreys are additionally protected under the UKBAP priority list.

Eels are a UKBAP priority species, critically endangered under the IUCN red list and protected under CITES.

Comments

The Dee DSFB welcomes the opportunity to respond to the EIA. In general we find it difficult to comment on the approaches and findings outlined in the EIA in relation to Atlantic salmon due to lack of robust scientific research, a key requirement to fully understand potential interactions. The proposed Bowdun Offshore Wind Farm is sited approximately 38km offshore, to the east of Aberdeenshire, covering a seabed area of approximately 187km$_2$ this proposed development is very close to the River Dee SAC and has the potential to be on the migration route for Atlantic salmon and other important species.

We would request that where evidence of negative impact on a protected species is inconclusive and impacts of development are uncertain, reasonable efforts should be made to fill evidence gaps and decision makers should apply precaution within an overall risk-based approach. The following comments are provided, and we would also draw attention to Fishery Management Scotland's response to the 'Offshore Wind Policy Statement: Scotland's Offshore Wind Ambition" and highlight previous comments from FMS response from September 2024 in respect of the Bowdun Offshore Wind Farm Limited – Scoping consultation.

1. For diadromous fish, there is a lack of current information on their use of the marine environment, and an apparent lack of ambition and resource to study and understand the potential impacts of developments on diadromous fish.

2. We remain keen to work constructively with the developers, Marine Directorate and NatureScot to identify appropriate monitoring and research programmes which will allow us to be able to assess the acknowledged risks of proposed marine developments in a more appropriate manner. There is a clear and urgent need to fund, plan and start strategic research on the movement, abundance, swimming depth, feeding behaviour and impact pathways relevant to diadromous fish. Such research would clearly feed into the potential mitigation measures that might be deemed appropriate, and the conditions under which such mitigation should be enacted. Given the scale of development in the North Sea, developers should be required to work together to fund strategic monitoring, to allow more certainty for all involved.

   The scale of proposed offshore developments and other technical approaches to marine renewables development represents a step-change in the exposure of marine animals of high cultural and economic significance to attendant risks. As highlighted above, understanding of many of these risks is insufficient to support proposals for mitigation even at the stage when substantial developments are being submitted for licensing. The cumulative impact of such

proposals, alongside those developments already submitted or likely to follow in the near future is potentially even greater. We believe that more needs to be done to ensure that the best scientific talent is made available to find practicable ways to address the unresolved uncertainties.

3. A more widespread body of scientific research and its effective incorporation into environmental decision-making is required to achieve the dual objectives of marine development and ensuring that human impact on the marine environment is managed to protect and enhance important marine ecosystems and species. The Dee DSFB would recommend that further robust scientific research into salmonid migration and potential stressors within the marine environment is undertaken to protect this species, which is ecologically, culturally and economically important to Scotland.

4. Atlantic salmon are an iconic species and now endangered, they are ecologically, culturally and economically important to Scotland. We would request that large scale Marine Developments should financially support the protection and recovery of this species in both it's marine and freshwater phases by contributing to a collective fund for nature recovery.

If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

[Redacted]

Edwin third

River Operations Manager, Dee District Salmon Fishery Board

Dundee Airport

From:	Safeguarding
To:	MD Marine Renewables
Cc:	Safeguarding
Subject:	MD-00012075 & MD-00012076 - Bowdun Offshore Wind Farm Limited - Bowdun Offshore Wind Farm - EIA Section 36 Consent and Marine Licence Application - Consultation - Response Required by 19 June 2026
Date:	12 June 2026 14:04:34
Attachments:	image001.png values2025_49f0881e-b581-44a4-b961-1aecd2620b56.png

OFFICIAL

Dear Sir / Madam,

Thank you for your email giving detail of the Bowdun Offshore Wind Farm's application for section 36 consent and marine licence application.

This proposal is located out-with our safeguarding criteria. As such HIAL have no comment to make and need not be consulted further.

Regards,

Andy Brown
HIAL Safeguarding Officer.

Safeguarding
Highlands and Islands Airports Ltd
Inverness Airport Dalcross IV2 7JB
www.hial.co.uk

Hywind Scotland

From:	**[Redacted]**
To:	MD Marine Renewables
Cc:	**[Redacted]**
Subject:	RE: MD-00012075 & MD-00012076 - Bowdun Offshore Wind Farm Limited - Bowdun Offshore Wind Farm - EIA Section 36 Consent and Marine Licence Application - Consultation - Response Required by 19 June 2026
Date:	05 June 2026 14:47:42
Attachments:	image001.png image003.png

Dear Sir / Madam,

On behalf of Hywind Scotland I would like to confirm that we don't have any comments on the latest documents for Bowdun Offshore Wind Farm, but we would like to stay informed about further steps in the application process.

Kind regards,

[Redacted]

Offshore environmental specialist
REN EUR RD
Equinor Polska sp. z o.o.

[Redacted]

[Redacted]
Visitor address: Aleja Grunwaldzka 472C, 80-309 Gdansk
Marszalkowska 107, 00-110 Warszawa

www.equinor.com

Please consider the environment before printing this email

Joint Radio Company

From:	Joint Radio Company
To:	MD Marine Renewables
Subject:	Re: Bowdun Offshore Wind Farm - APP/2025/1952 & MD-00012075 & MD-00012076 (SCOP-0056)
Date:	29 May 2026 18:10:29

If any details of this proposal change, particularly the position or scale of any structures (including turbine(s)), this clearance will be void and re-evaluation of the proposal will be necessary.

Dear Sir/Madam,

Planning Ref: MD-00012075, MD-00012076, (APP/2025/1952)

Name/Location: Bowdun Offshore Windfarm

Thank you for the latest consultation in the application stage for this planning application, we can see the updated information.
It appears that the offshore turbine array area has remained the same as we cleared in our last response on 10/10/2024. The dimensions appear to have changed slightly (lower maximum hub height), but this does not affect our clearance. Our last **Clearance** on 10/10/2024 still stands at the time of this response. Our last **Clearance** of the onshore substation area on 08/10/2025 also remains valid based on the latest information available in the Aberdeenshire Planning application, reference APP/2025/1952.

Please see a copy of the details used in the response for reference below, updated to reference the reduction in hub height:

Max Number of Turbines: 67

Turbine Array Area Boundary Points at NGR (OGSB36 National Grid):

Turbine Array Area Vertex	Easting	Northing
1	450237	789415
2	441200	779035
3	438537	791001
4	436648	796828
5	434691	793127
6	433971	784319
7	433169	790249
8	432840	780537
9	431033	785543

Max Hub Height (above LAT): 196.12m **Max Blade Length**: 163m

This proposal is cleared with respect to radio link infrastructure operated by the local energy networks.

JRC analyses proposals for wind farms on behalf of the UK Fuel & Power Industry. This is to assess their potential to interfere with radio systems operated by utility companies in support of their regulatory operational requirements.

In the case of this proposed wind energy development, JRC does not foresee any potential problems based on known interference scenarios and the data you have provided. However, if any details of the wind farm change, particularly the disposition or scale of any turbine(s), it will be necessary to re-evaluate the proposal.

In making this judgement, JRC has used its best endeavours with the available data, although we recognise that there may be effects which are as yet unknown or inadequately predicted. JRC cannot therefore be held liable if subsequently problems arise that we have not predicted.

It should be noted that this clearance pertains only to the date of its issue. As the use of the spectrum is dynamic, the use of the band is changing on an ongoing basis and consequently, developers are advised to seek re-coordination prior to considering any design changes.

Regards

Wind Farm Team

Friars House
Manor House Drive
Coventry CV1 2TE
United Kingdom

Office: 02476 932 185

JRC Ltd. is a Joint Venture between the Energy Networks Association (on behalf of the UK Energy Industries) and National Grid.
Registered in England & Wales: 2990041
About The JRC | Joint Radio Company | JRC

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Kincardine Offshore Wind Farm

From:	[Redacted]
To:	MD Marine Renewables
Cc:	[Redacted]
Subject:	RE: MD-00012075 & MD-00012076 - Bowdun Offshore Wind Farm Limited - Bowdun Offshore Wind Farm - EIA Section 36 Consent and Marine Licence Application - Consultation - Response Required by 19 June 2026
Date:	22 May 2026 15:29:56
Attachments:	image004.png

Good Afternoon

Following our review of the Section 36 consent and marine licence applications for the Bowdun Offshore Windfarm, the Kincardine Offshore Windfarm team submits the following comments:

1. **Ornithology & Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)**

- **Herring Gull Displacement and Attraction (Table 11.96):** We note that Herring Gull has been excluded from the distributional responses, barrier effects, and displacement sections. Operational experience at Kincardine shows that Herring Gulls exhibit the most noticeable change in distribution post-construction. We have observed significant attraction to the site, with birds utilizing turbine structures to roost and loaf, occasionally in large numbers. While this attraction has not increased collision mortality at Kincardine, the behavioral effects of offshore structures on this red-listed species remain poorly understood. We recommend further consideration of Wind Turbine Generator (WTG) and Offshore Substation Platform (OSP) designs to reduce their attractiveness to birds through specific design features and technology.

- **Gannet Cumulative Impacts (Troup Head, Pennan and Lions Head SPA):** Troup Head is the closest Gannet colony to the Bowdun site, with the 2021 Seabirds Count census estimating 5,600 Apparently Occupied Nests/Sites (AON/AOS). While the scoping report characterizes this colony as being "of relatively recent origin," population numbers have steadily tracked (and now exceed) those on Fair Isle, which was included in the analysis. Given this sustained growth, the cumulative impacts on the Troup Head colony should be assessed more thoroughly. We strongly recommend that a Population Viability Analysis (PVA) be conducted for this species at the Troup, Pennan, and Lion's Head SPA, despite Gannet not currently being listed as a qualifying breeding feature.

- **Empirical Data vs. Predicted Collision Mortality (Tables 11.58, 11.60, 11.62):** The cumulative impact assessments rely on outdated, highly precautionary collision risk estimates for Kincardine rather than empirical data. Over nearly three years of continuous video collision monitoring at Kincardine, no Gannet or Great Black-backed Gull collisions were observed; only two total collisions (one Kittiwake and one large gull) were recorded. This aligns with studies at the Aberdeen EOWDC, which recorded zero collisions. The assessment should be updated to reflect actual operational data rather than over-precautionary theoretical models.

- **Project Environmental Monitoring Plan (PEMP):** The current details regarding the PEMP (Table 11.15) are limited to a high-level acknowledgment of the requirement. We note the intention to "detail the methodology that will be used to validate the impact assessment predictions." We urge the regulators to establish a clear framework for how post-construction empirical data—especially if

significantly lower than pre-construction predictions—will be integrated into future cumulative assessments.

2. **Technical & Stakeholder Liaison**

- **Wake Effects:** We request clarification on what specific studies or modeling have been undertaken to analyze any potential wake effects of the Bowdun project on the operational Kincardine site.

- **Fisheries Liaison:** To maintain strong regional stakeholder relations, we suggest that the Bowdun team consults and coordinates with Michael Sutherland, the Kincardine Fisheries Liaison Officer (FLO). Kincardine has established an excellent working relationship with local fishers, and close coordination between our projects is vital to ensure cumulative construction and operational activities do not disrupt these shared ties.

- **Academic Collaboration (eSweets Project):** We invite the Bowdun team to engage with the **eSweets** research program conducted at Kincardine. This consortium of leading UK marine scientific institutions—including the Universities of Liverpool, Bangor, East Anglia, Southampton, and Hull, alongside SAMS, Marine Scotland, and the NOC—is generating data that could benefit the Bowdun project. Bowdun are welcome to contact the author for further details.

Best regards.

[Redacted]
Project Manager (Special Projects)

[Redacted]
Cobra Wind International Limited
Level 7, Union Point, Blaikies Quay, Aberdeen, AB11 5PW, United Kingdom
https://www.grupocobra.com/

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Ministry of Defence

Defence Infrastructure Organisation

Wendy Talbot
Assistant Safeguarding Manager
Ministry of Defence
Safeguarding
Defence Infrastructure Organisation
St George's House
DMS Whittington
Lichfield, Staffordshire
WS14 9PY
United Kingdom

Application Ref: MD-00012075 & MD-00012076 (and s36)

Our Reference: DIO10064270

E-mail: DIO-Safeguarding-Wind@mod.gov.uk

Planning Officer
Scottish Government
Licensing Operations Team
Marine Directorate
Marine Laboratory
ABERDEEN
AB11 9DB

11 June 2026

Dear Sir / Madam

ELECTRICITY ACT 1989
The Electricity Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017
The Electricity (Applications for Consent) Regulations 1990
MARINE (SCOTLAND) ACT 2010
The Marine Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017
MARINE (SCOTLAND) ACT 2010
The Marine Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017

MD-00012075 & MD-00012076 – Bowdun Offshore Wind Farm Limited - Bowdun Offshore Wind Farm – Approximately 38 kilometres (km) east of Stonehaven on the Aberdeenshire coast.

Thank you for consulting the Ministry of Defence (MOD) in relation to the above Section 36 and Marine Licence applications. Consultation was received by this office by e:mail dated 7 May 2026.

The Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) Safeguarding Team represents the MOD as a consultee in UK planning and energy consenting systems to ensure that development does not compromise or degrade the operation of defence sites such as aerodromes, explosives storage sites, air weapon ranges, and technical sites or training resources such as the Military Low Flying System.

I write to advise the safeguarding position of the MOD in relation to the above applications to construct and operate the Bowdun Offshore Wind Farm.

This scheme will comprise of:-

- up to 67 wind turbine generators (WTGs), with a maximum height to blade tip of up to 359.12 metres (m) above Lowest Astronomical Tide (LAT), located approximately 38km offshore east of Stonehaven on the east Aberdeenshire coast of mainland Scotland;

- up to three Offshore Substation Platform (OSP) with a maximum height of 70m including lightning protection and ancillary structures; and
- interconnector cables and up to three offshore export cables connecting the OSPs to the landfall on the east Aberdeenshire coast at Benholm.

The principal concerns of the MOD with respect to this proposed wind farm relate to the impact of the development on the operation and capability of air defence radar systems and the potential to create a physical obstruction to air traffic movements.

At this time the MOD must **object** to the proposed development on the basis that the scheme would have a significant and detrimental impact on the effective operation and capability of air defence radar deployed at Remote Radar Head (RRH) Buchan.

Air Defence (AD) radar

The proposed WTGs would be located approximately 68.7km from, detectable by, and will cause unacceptable interference to the AD radar deployed at RRH Buchan.

WTGs have been shown to have detrimental effects on the operation of radar. These include the desensitisation of radar in the vicinity of the WTGs, and the creation of "false" aircraft returns. The probability of the radar detecting aircraft flying over or in the vicinity of the WTGs would be reduced, hence WTG proliferation within a specific locality can result in unacceptable degradation of the radar's operational integrity. This would reduce the RAF's ability to detect and deter aircraft in United Kingdom sovereign airspace, thereby preventing it from effectively performing its primary function of Air Defence of the United Kingdom.

Our assessments have determined that, when operational, the proposed wind farm will cause unacceptable and unmanageable interference to the effective operation of an air defence radar deployed at RRH Buchan.

The need to mitigate the impacts of the proposed development upon the effective operation of RRH Buchan has been recognised by the applicant and is set out in Volume 2, Chapter 15, Aviation and Radar of the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR). To overcome a radar objection the MOD expects a mitigation proposal to be submitted, which will be subject to both a technical and operational assessment. If deemed viable, the MOD may then be in a position to offer a suspensive planning condition to secure radar mitigation. Whilst the need for mitigation is discussed within the Aviation and Radar chapter of the EIAR (paragraph 15.10.27), at this stage the MOD has not received a mitigation proposal. It is the applicant's responsibility to develop and submit a mitigation proposal to address the impact on the AD radar deployed at RRH Buchan.

On the basis of the information provided the MOD must **object** to this proposal due to the impact it will have on the operation and capability of the AD radar deployed at RRH Buchan.

Physical Obstruction

In this case the development falls within Low Flying Area 14 (LFA 14). Within this area fixed wing aircraft may operate as low as 250 feet or 76.2 metres above surface level to conduct low level flight training. The addition of turbines and other structures in this location would introduce a physical obstruction to low flying aircraft operating in the area.

In the event that the applicant is able to overcome the objection listed above regarding air defence radar the MOD would require that conditions are added to any consent issued requiring the submission, approval and implementation of an aviation lighting scheme, and that sufficient data is submitted to ensure that structures can be accurately charted to allow deconfliction. The Applicant has acknowledged the MOD requirement for MOD accredited aviation safety lighting and the need to submit sufficient data to enable charting of the structures in Volume 2, Chapter 15, Aviation and Radar in Table 15.10 Embedded Mitigation Adopted, and

Paragraphs 15.10.31 to 15.10.38 “Impact 4 - potential impact on military low flying and UK SAR helicopter operations due to presence of obstacles (wind turbines in construction)” of the EIAR. Embedded Mitigation Adopted ID 13 (Table 15-10) references the submission of an outline Lighting and Marking Plan (LMP) – Volume 4, Appendix 31; the MOD have reviewed this document and neither Section 5.3 “Aviation” nor Table 5.2 “Aviation Lighting and Marking during O&M” contain specifications for, or details of, proposed lighting. The MOD would welcome further engagement on this issue as it is of significant concern to Aviation Safety. The MOD also note that Embedded Mitigation Adopted ID 19 (Table 15-10) states a height for those temporary obstacles which need to be identified to aviation crews as over 91.4m; the MOD request that NOTAMs are issued to identify any temporary obstacle to aircrew where it would have a height of 50m or more.

The development proposed contains Wind Turbine Generators which have a height exceeding 60m above Highest Astronomical Tide (HAT) that would be subject to the lighting requirements set out in the Air Navigation Order 2016. In addition to WTGs OSPs with height of 70m above LAT are also proposed. In order to assure Aviation Safety, the MOD will request that a condition is added to any consent which might be issued that requires the submission, approval, and implementation of an aviation safety lighting specification that details the installation of MOD accredited aviation safety lighting; and requires the submission of sufficient data to allow the development to be appropriately charted.

Offshore Transmission Assets, including Landfall

The offshore Transmission Assets will make landfall at Benholm, on the east Aberdeenshire coast. The landfall element of the development does not fall within a statutory safeguarded zone. Assessments completed by the MOD have identified that there are no safeguarding concerns with either the offshore Transmission Assets or onshore landfall elements of the proposed development.

Unexploded Ordnance (UXO)

The potential for UXO to be present within the development area and the necessity for clearance should be considered. Volume 3, Technical Appendix 19.2: Unexploded Ordnance Technical Report identifies the issues associated with UXO and this development. Section 11.4 outlines the action needed should UXO clearance action be identified as a requirement following pre-construction surveys, including the requirement to obtain marine licences. The MOD sees no reason not to agree with the approach detailed.

Summary

For the avoidance of any doubt, MOD must **object** to the proposal on the grounds of the unacceptable impact that the development would have on air defence radar systems deployed at RRH Benbecula.

I trust this is clear however should you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully

[Redacted]

Wendy Talbot
Assistant Safeguarding Manager

NATS

From:	NATS Safeguarding
To:	MD Marine Renewables
Cc:	**[Redacted]**
Subject:	RE: MD-00012075 & MD-00012076 - Bowdun Offshore Wind Farm Limited - Bowdun Offshore Wind Farm - EIA Section 36 Consent and Marine Licence Application - Consultation - Response Required by 19 June 2026 [SG38098]
Date:	11 May 2026 13:33:44
Attachments:	image002.png image001.png FW Thistle Wind Partners Limited - Bowdun Offshore Wind Farm - ScotWind E3 Site 38km off Aberdeenshire Coast - Scoping Consultation - Response due by 11 October 2024 SG38098.msg

Abby,

NATS position remains one of objection as detailed in the attached, provided during the scoping process.

NATS however notes the applicant's coverage of this topic in EIA Report Volume 2, Chapter 15 including the statement that "The Applicant intends to continue negotiations with NATS with the aim of delivering a suitable PSR mitigation solution prior to the O&M phase of the Proposed Development." and commits to our involvement in these negotiations with the goal of agreeing a path to mitigation.

Regards,

[Redacted]

NATS Safeguarding

NATS Internal

RYA

From:	**[Redacte**
To:	MD Marine Renewables
Subject:	RE: MD-00012075 & MD-00012076 - Bowdun Offshore Wind Farm Limited - Bowdun Offshore Wind Farm - EIA Section 36 Consent and Marine Licence Application - Consultation - Response Required by 19 June 2026
Date:	13 May 2026 17:13:49
Attachments:	image001.png image002.png image003.png

Hi **[Red**

I write to inform you that RYA Scotland has no objections to this application

Kind Regards

[Reda
d]
[Redacted]

RYA Scotland Safeguarding Lead

Royal Yachting Association Scotland
Mobile: [Redacted]
E: [Redacted]
Office number: 0131 202 4985

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Scottish Fishermen's Federation

Our Ref: OB MD-00012075 & MD-00012076 Bowdun OWF EIA/0026/001

Your Ref: MD-00012075 & MD-00012076 - Bowdun Offshore Wind Farm Limited - Bowdun Offshore Wind Farm - EIA Section 36 Consent and Marine Licence Application - Consultation

Scottish Fishermen's Federation
24 Rubislaw Terrace
Aberdeen, AB10 1XE
Scotland UK

T: +44 (0) 1224 646944
E: sff@sff.co.uk

www.sff.co.uk

2nd July 2026

Marine Directorate – Licensing Operations Team
Scottish Government
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SFF Response MD-00012075 & MD-00012076 - Bowdun Offshore Wind Farm Limited - Bowdun Offshore Wind Farm - EIA Section 36 Consent and Marine Licence Application - Consultation

The Scottish Fishermen's Federation (SFF) welcomes the opportunity to respond to the statutory consultation on the applications submitted by Bowdun Offshore Wind Farm Limited for Section 36 consent and associated Marine Licences.

The SFF represents the 450 plus fishing vessels through its constituent associations, including the Anglo Scottish Fishermen's Association (ASFA), Fife Fishermen's Association, Fishing Vessel Agents and Owners Association, Mallaig & North West Fishermen's Association (MNWFA), Orkney Fisheries Association (OFA), Scottish Pelagic Fishermen's Association (SPFA), the Scottish White Fish Producer's Association (SWFPA) and Shetland Fishermen's Association (SFA).

SFF recognises the role of offshore renewable energy in contributing to Scotland's climate and energy objectives. However, SFF emphasises that such development must proceed in a manner consistent with statutory marine planning duties, including the safeguarding of existing and legitimate marine uses of the sea, particularly commercial fishing.

Summary Position
Having reviewed the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) and supporting documentation, SFF does not consider that the impacts on commercial fisheries have been sufficiently characterised, quantified, avoided or mitigated to support the conclusions of predominantly minor adverse and non significant effects. In SFF's view, the remaining uncertainties and assessment deficiencies prevent a robust conclusion from being reached regarding the scale, significance and acceptability of fisheries impacts throughout the construction, operation and decommissioning phases of the Proposed Development.

Across the EIAR there is a consistent pattern whereby:

- Significant uncertainty is retained regarding cable burial, cable protection and long-term seabed interaction
- Fisheries displacement is acknowledged but not robustly assessed
- Mitigation relies heavily upon future plans, liaison arrangements and procedural measures rather than defined outcomes
- Impact significance is frequently reduced through assumptions regarding adaptability and recoverability
- Cumulative effects are inadequately assessed
- Physical, ecological and socioeconomic impacts on fisheries are considered separately but not effectively integrated
- Material inconsistencies exist between technical chapters
- Key aspects of fisheries mitigation, cable burial performance and infrastructure fisheries interaction remain dependent upon post-consent plans, future assessment and subsequent approval processes.

The EIAR identifies substantial offshore infrastructure including up to 67 turbines, multiple offshore substations and approximately 397 km of subsea cables. It acknowledges extensive cable protection, ongoing maintenance interventions, recurring seabed disturbance and the implementation of safety zones. However, these characteristics are not reflected in the significance conclusions presented for commercial fisheries.
SFF is particularly concerned that the assessment frequently relies upon assumed mitigation effectiveness, future management measures and the anticipated adaptability of fishing activity when reducing impacts to minor adverse and not significant.

Taken together, SFF considers that the EIAR does not provide a sufficiently robust or precautionary evidential basis to demonstrate that impacts on commercial fisheries will be acceptable throughout construction, operation and decommissioning.

Accordingly, SFF does not consider that the assessment provides a sufficient basis to support the conclusions of no significant residual effects on commercial fisheries.

Policy and Legislative Context[1]
Under the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009[2] and Marine (Scotland) Act 2010[3], marine planning is intended to manage demands on the marine environment in a sustainable manner whilst providing a framework for marine development and licensing. Commercial fishing is a recognised and legitimate use of the marine environment and forms an established component of Scotland's marine economy. Whilst Chapter 2 places considerable emphasis on renewable energy, climate change and offshore wind deployment objectives, the marine planning framework also contains objectives relating to the sustainable management of marine space, protection of existing marine activities, support for resilient coastal communities and minimisation of conflict between marine users. SFF does not consider that these objectives are reflected to the same extent within the subsequent assessment of commercial fisheries impacts.

SFF also notes that Chapter 2 primarily describes the relevant policy and legislative framework but provides limited explanation of how key policies relating to existing marine users, sustainable marine industries and coexistence have influenced project design, assessment methodology or the development of fisheries specific mitigation measures. As a result, the chapter identifies policy objectives but does not clearly demonstrate how those objectives have been translated into project level measures to avoid, reduce or minimise effects on commercial fisheries.

[1] Thistle Wind Partners (2026) Bowdun Offshore Wind Farm, Offshore EIA Report, Volume 1, Chapter 2: Policy and Legislation (Document Ref. TWP-BOW-RPS-OFE-RPT-00003, April 2026)
[2] UK Parliament (2009). Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 (c.23). London: The Stationery Office.
[3] Scottish Parliament (2010). Marine (Scotland) Act 2010 (asp 5). Edinburgh: The Stationery Office.

The National Marine Plan[4] supports marine development whilst incorporating appropriate protections and safeguards for the environment, existing marine activities and other sea users. It also seeks to achieve a sustainable marine economy and sustainable use of marine resources. SFF does not consider that the EIAR demonstrates how these objectives have been achieved in relation to commercial fisheries, particularly in the context of displacement, cumulative loss of fishing opportunity and increasing competition for marine space. SFF notes that compliance with these objectives requires more than identification of relevant policy provisions and should be demonstrated through project design, assessment and mitigation measures which seek to minimise conflict between marine users and support the continued sustainable operation of existing marine industries.

SFF further notes that Chapter 2 states that the primary objective of the EIA process is to ensure that likely significant environmental effects are properly understood and mitigated before consents are granted. SFF considers that this principle is particularly relevant to commercial fisheries impacts, where the assessment should provide sufficient evidence to understand, avoid and minimise displacement, loss of fishing opportunity and associated effects on fishing businesses and communities before consent decisions are made.

SFF also notes that Chapter 2 focuses predominantly on international climate change and renewable energy policy. By contrast, little consideration is given to the wider international framework governing sustainable use of the marine environment, including the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)[5], which establishes principles relating to the sustainable use of marine resources, protection of the marine environment and management of competing uses of marine space.

Whilst such instruments do not determine the outcome of individual consent applications, they provide important context for marine planning and reinforce the need for balanced decision making which takes account of both future development objectives and existing marine industries.

SFF also notes that consultation analysis referenced within Chapter 2 identifies cumulative impacts on the fishing industry and displacement of fishers as matters requiring particular consideration in the context of offshore wind development. SFF considers that these concerns are directly relevant to the Proposed Development and should be afforded substantial weight in the assessment and determination of the application.

Project Description[6]

The Project Description identifies a large scale offshore development comprising (up to 67 turbines; 3 offshore substations; an array area of approximately 187 km²; approximately 397 km of subsea cables, including inter-array, interconnector and export cables; extensive cable crossings; substantial cable protection requirements; and recurring maintenance and repair activities over the operational life of the project). For commercial fisheries, the primary interaction pathway is not the turbine infrastructure itself but the extensive cable network and associated seabed interventions.

Particular concern arises from the proposed cable infrastructure. The EIAR identifies a target burial depth of 1.5 m, however burial depths of 0.5 m or potentially less where burial is not achievable, remain within the design envelope. Furthermore, the Cable Burial Risk Assessment (CBRA), which will ultimately determine burial feasibility and protection requirements, has not yet been undertaken and is deferred to the post-consent stage. As a consequence, the extent of cable exposure, the requirement for cable protection and the resulting interaction with fishing gear remain uncertain at the point of application.

[4] Scottish Government (2015). Scotland's National Marine Plan. Edinburgh: Scottish Government.
[5] United Nations (1982). United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). Adopted 10 December 1982; entered into force 16 November 1994
[6] Thistle Wind Partners (2026) Bowdun Offshore Wind Farm, Offshore EIA Report, Volume 1, Chapter 3: Project Description (Document Ref. TWP-BOW-RPS-OFE-RPT-00004, April 2026)

The EIAR further confirms that up to 50% of installed cables may require protection. Cable protection may extend for substantial distances and comprise structures up to 10 m wide and 2 m high. The scale of cable protection proposed is considerable, with the project design envelope allowing for approximately 755,000 m² of inter-array cable protection, 180,000 m² of interconnector cable protection and approximately 1,050,000 m² of export cable protection. In total, the project design envelope allows for approximately 1,985,000 m² of cable protection across the array and export cable systems. This represents a substantial area of potential seabed modification which extends well beyond the footprint of the turbine foundations themselves.

The EIAR also confirms that where burial is not achievable, cables may be installed directly on the seabed and protected using a range of above seabed protection measures. As a consequence, the project design envelope explicitly includes scenarios in which fishing activity may interact with unburied or partially buried infrastructure. SFF does not consider that the implications of this uncertainty are fully reflected in the significance conclusions presented elsewhere in the EIAR. Whilst cable protection is presented as a measure intended to protect project infrastructure, from a fisheries perspective it constitutes an impact pathway in its own right. Such structures create long linear seabed obstructions, increase interaction risk for mobile fishing gears and may result in areas that are no longer practically fishable.

The Project Description allows for up to nine inter-array cable crossings, three interconnector cable crossings and six export cable crossings within the assessed project envelope. These crossings may extend up to 500 m in length and up to 2.5 m in height above the seabed. Although individually limited in footprint, these features represent discrete snagging hazards that can have a disproportionate effect on fishing operations and should not be characterised as minor infrastructure components.

The construction phase will require substantial seabed intervention, including trenching, sandwave clearance and boulder clearance activities. The EIAR identifies approximately 3.78 km² of direct seabed disturbance associated with cable installation, alongside the movement of large volumes of sediment during sandwave clearance activities. The need for sandwave clearance is justified on the basis that natural sandwave movement could otherwise result in cable exposure during the operational life of the project. SFF notes that this acknowledgement of potential cable exposure appears difficult to reconcile with subsequent assumptions regarding long-term fisheries compatibility and interaction risk. These activities have the potential to alter seabed conditions relied upon by commercial fisheries and may result in temporary disruption to fishing activity both within and beyond the immediate construction footprint.

The EIAR also identifies the use of rolling and maintenance related 500 m safety zones during construction and statutory 500m safety zones during major maintenance activities. Given a construction programme of up to five years, together with recurring maintenance and repair and cable intervention activities throughout operation, fisheries displacement cannot be viewed solely as a short-term construction issue. Fishing activity may be repeatedly disrupted by cable installation, inspection, repair and reburial works throughout the operational life of the project.

The Project Description confirms that operational maintenance activities are expected to include recurring cable intervention works, including annual repair and reburial requirements. The EIAR states that export cable repair and seabed intervention works may require excavation, reburial and remedial cable protection over up to 6,390 m of cable annually. This indicates an expectation that cable instability, exposure or degradation may occur over time. For commercial fisheries, this creates the prospect of ongoing disturbance and repeated interaction with maintenance activities rather than a single temporary construction impact.

SFF considers that the scale, complexity and persistence of the infrastructure described in Chapter 3 are difficult to reconcile with later conclusions that impacts on commercial fisheries will be minor and not significant. In particular, the assessment relies heavily on assumptions regarding successful cable burial and fisheries coexistence despite substantial post-consent uncertainty surrounding burial feasibility, cable protection requirements and long-term seabed conditions. The EIAR does not demonstrate that trawling,

dredging or other mobile fishing activities can safely and effectively resume across affected areas following construction, nor that long-term interaction with cable protection, cable crossings and recurring maintenance activities can occur without material consequences for commercial fisheries. Accordingly, SFF considers that Chapter 3 identifies a number of potentially significant fisheries interaction pathways that are not fully reflected in the significance conclusions presented elsewhere within the EIAR.

EIA Methodology[7]

While the methodology follows established EIA practice, its application gives rise to several concerns in relation to commercial fisheries. The assessment is heavily dependent upon a Project Design Envelope approach, whereby key elements of the project remain undefined at application stage. The methodology confirms that detailed design, technology selection and project refinement will continue post-consent and that the assessment is based upon a Maximum Design Scenario derived from a range of potential project parameters. In particular:

- burial success remains uncertain
- cable protection requirements remain uncertain
- final routing and micrositing remain flexible
- interaction with fishing activity remains dependent upon post-consent decisions.

As commercial fisheries are highly dependent upon precise spatial relationships, SFF does not consider that a parameter based worst case approach necessarily represents the worst case for fisheries. Fisheries impacts are often highly location specific and influenced by the interaction between infrastructure, fishing practices, seabed conditions and access to particular grounds. Consequently, a worst case engineering scenario does not necessarily equate to the worst case for commercial fisheries.

The methodology also assumes the effectiveness of embedded mitigation before impacts are assessed. Measures including cable burial, cable protection, fisheries management plans and a range of post-consent plans and strategies are treated as effective despite the absence of evidence demonstrating their effectiveness in maintaining fishing access or reducing interaction risks. As identified in Project Description, significant uncertainty remains regarding burial success, cable exposure and the extent of cable protection that may ultimately be required. The assessment therefore relies to a considerable extent on the assumed effectiveness of measures which have not yet been demonstrated for the project specific circumstance.

SFF also notes that a number of measures presented within the Schedule of Mitigation and Commitments relate to monitoring, future studies or post-construction verification rather than the avoidance or reduction of impacts. Whilst monitoring has an important role in identifying and understanding project effects, it does not in itself prevent impacts from occurring. SFF therefore does not consider that monitoring alone can be relied upon to reduce impact significance.

SFF notes that concerns regarding the treatment of mitigation were also raised during consultation by NatureScot, who advised that plans do not in themselves constitute mitigation and that it is the measures contained within those plans which mitigate impacts. NatureScot further advised that commitments to develop plans without sufficient detail should not be treated as suitable mitigation.

SFF further notes that fisheries mitigation measures identified within the Schedule of Mitigation and Commitments are largely procedural in nature, focusing on liaison, communication, notification and disruption arrangements. However, the assessment identifies few clearly defined measures that would directly avoid or reduce displacement, loss of access to fishing grounds, increased steaming distances or the redistribution of fishing effort. Consequently, SFF does not consider that the effectiveness of fisheries specific mitigation in reducing operational impacts on fishing activity has been demonstrated.

[7] Thistle Wind Partners (2026) Bowdun Offshore Wind Farm, Offshore EIA Report, Volume 1, Chapter 4: Environmental Impact Assessment Methodology (Document Ref. TWP-BOW-RPS-OFE-RPT-00006, April 2026); and Thistle Wind Partners (2026). Bowdun Offshore Wind Farm, Offshore EIA Report, Volume 3, Technical Appendix 4.4: Cumulative Effects Assessment – Screening (Document Ref. TWP-BOW-RPS-OFE-RPT-00007, April 2026); and Thistle Wind Partners (2026). Bowdun Offshore Wind Farm, Offshore EIA Report, Volume 3, Technical Appendix 4.6: Schedule of Mitigation and Commitments (Document Ref. TWP-BOW-RPS-OFE-RPT-00009, April 2026)

The methodology also relies heavily on the application of professional judgement where uncertainty or ranges of potential effects exist. Whilst expert judgement is an established component of EIA practice, the assessment provides limited transparency regarding how fisheries specific conclusions have been reached in circumstances where uncertainty remains. This introduces the potential for subjective interpretation and creates difficulties in independently verifying significance determinations. The methodology confirms that sensitivity and significance determinations may, where a range of outcomes exists, ultimately rely upon topic expert judgement.

The significance framework further creates a tendency towards assigning impacts as minor adverse, particularly where receptor sensitivity and impact magnitude are conservatively defined. Several magnitude classifications rely on qualitative descriptors such as 'very minor loss' or 'loss of resource but not adversely affecting the integrity of the resource', without identifying clear quantitative thresholds, increasing reliance on professional judgement in determining significance.

The sensitivity framework also appears poorly suited to the assessment of commercial fisheries. Concepts such as vulnerability and recoverability may be appropriate for environmental receptors but do not readily capture the operational realities of fishing businesses, including economic dependency, fleet behaviour, spatial inflexibility and the practical consequences of effort displacement.

A further concern relates to the significance framework itself, whereby only effects assessed as Moderate or above are considered significant, whilst effects assessed as Minor or below are stated to warrant little, if any, weight in the decision making process. Commercial fisheries impacts frequently manifest through multiple concurrent pressures, each individually assessed as minor, but collectively resulting in substantial operational disruption. The methodology therefore risks systematically underestimating the significance of combined fisheries effects.

SFF is also concerned that multiple fisheries impacts, including displacement, access restriction, snagging risk, increased steaming and operational disruption, are assessed separately, with limited consideration of their combined effect on fishing operations.

Related to this, SFF is concerned that effects classified as negligible are excluded from the interrelated effects assessment where they are assessed as negligible across all project phases. Whilst this approach may be proportionate for some receptors, commercial fisheries are often affected by the combined influence of numerous individually minor or negligible pressures, including access restrictions, cable interactions, displacement and increased steaming requirements. Excluding such effects from subsequent assessments risks overlooking their combined operational consequences. The methodology explicitly states that effects assessed as negligible across all stages of the project will not be included within the interrelated effects assessment.

SFF notes that a similar concern was raised by NatureScot during consultation, which advised that project alone effects assessed as negligible may nevertheless contribute to significant cumulative effects when considered alongside other projects and pressures. This is particularly relevant to commercial fisheries, where multiple individually minor changes can combine to affect fishing patterns, operational viability and access to fishing grounds.

SFF further notes that the cumulative effects assessment methodology relies on a screening process that excludes projects on the basis of data confidence, development certainty, assumed temporal overlap and the existence of a defined effect receptor pathway. The screening methodology specifically excludes projects where there is considered to be no conceptual pathway, no physical overlap, no temporal overlap or insufficient confidence in the available project information. Whilst a proportionate screening process is necessary, SFF is concerned that these criteria may systematically exclude projects capable of contributing

to future cumulative fisheries and environmental pressures within a rapidly evolving offshore development environment.

Whilst these screening criteria are intended to provide a proportionate assessment, they rely heavily on current project information and assumed development programmes. SFF notes that projects screened out due to information limitations, programme uncertainty, perceived absence of overlap or assumed construction and operational timescales may nevertheless contribute to future cumulative displacement, access restriction and effort redistribution experienced by commercial fisheries, particularly where project programmes change, are delayed or ultimately become concurrent in practice.

SFF is also concerned by the reliance on direct effect receptor pathways during cumulative screening. Commercial fisheries, fish ecology and underwater noise assessments elsewhere within the EIAR recognise that effects may occur over considerable distances and through indirect mechanisms, including behavioural responses, species displacement and changes in fishing activity. Screening projects from detailed cumulative assessment on the basis of an assumed absence of pathways or limited spatial overlap may therefore fail to capture the full extent of cumulative pressures experienced by fisheries receptors.

SFF also notes a degree of inconsistency between the cumulative screening methodology and findings elsewhere within the EIAR. For example, the Fish and Shellfish Ecology and Underwater Noise assessments acknowledge the potential for effects to extend beyond the immediate project footprint, whilst cumulative screening places significant emphasis on physical overlap and direct pathways. Similarly, the Commercial Fisheries assessment recognises the importance of displacement and redistribution of fishing effort, yet projects may be excluded from cumulative assessment before such mechanisms are fully considered.

While the methodology follows established EIA practice, SFF is concerned that its application tends to reduce the apparent significance of commercial fisheries impacts through the combined effects of the Project Design Envelope approach, assumptions regarding mitigation effectiveness, significance thresholds that discount multiple minor impacts, assessment frameworks that are not well suited to the operational realities of commercial fishing activity, and cumulative screening processes that may exclude potentially relevant projects, impact pathways and future development interactions from detailed assessment.

SFF also remains concerned that a substantial proportion of the mitigation relied upon throughout the EIAR is dependent upon future agreement, post-consent plans, monitoring programmes or subsequent approval processes. As a result, the effectiveness of these measures has not been demonstrated within the assessment itself.

These methodological limitations are important because they form the basis for the conclusions reached throughout the Commercial Fisheries chapter and other fisheries relevant assessments. Consequently, SFF considers that the conclusions presented elsewhere within the EIAR should be interpreted with appropriate caution, particularly where they rely upon assumptions regarding displacement, adaptation, cable burial success, future coexistence with fishing activity, or the completeness of the cumulative assessment baseline.

Consultation and Engagement[8]

The EIAR documents extensive engagement with fisheries stakeholders throughout project development, including engagement with SFF, constituent associations, Fisheries Working Groups and other representatives of the fishing industry. SFF acknowledges the scale of consultation undertaken and recognises that engagement has been ongoing over a prolonged period. However, consultation should not be measured solely by the volume of engagement activities completed. The key question is whether fisheries

[8] Thistle Wind Partners (2026) Bowdun Offshore Wind Farm, Offshore EIA Report, Volume 1, Chapter 5: Consultation and Engagement (Document Ref. TWP-BOW-RPS-ENV-RPT-00018, April 2026); and Thistle Wind Partners (2026). Bowdun Offshore Wind Farm, Offshore EIA Report, Volume 3, Technical Appendix 5.2: Pre-Application Consultation Report (Document Ref. TWP-BOW-RPS-OFE-RPT-00002, April 2026)

concerns have demonstrably influenced project design and resulted in the avoidance, reduction or mitigation of impacts on commercial fisheries.

SFF notes that issues relating to:

- displacement
- cable protection
- cable burial
- cumulative effects
- fisheries disruption
- compensation
- continued fisheries access

have been raised repeatedly throughout the consultation process and remain evident within the final assessment.

Whilst the EIAR states that consultation feedback has informed project development, it provides limited transparency regarding the extent to which fisheries concerns resulted in substantive changes to project design, layout, cable routing or construction methodology. In particular, the EIAR does not clearly demonstrate:

- how fisheries feedback influenced site layout decisions
- how fisheries constraints influenced cable routing
- how key fishing grounds were avoided through design
- how vessel displacement has been minimised
- what design changes were made specifically in response to fisheries concerns.

Although the Applicant states that consultation has been undertaken in accordance with the Gunning Principles and that stakeholder feedback informed key decisions, the chapter does not clearly demonstrate how fisheries concerns influenced project design or what changes resulted directly from fisheries consultation.

SFF is also concerned that consultation relies heavily upon participation in regional and strategic forums, including the Eastern Region Commercial Fisheries Working Group and other collaborative industry forums. Whilst such forums provide a useful mechanism for information exchange, they are not a substitute for demonstrating how project specific fisheries concerns have informed project design, assessment and mitigation.

The chapter further demonstrates that fisheries stakeholders have consistently raised concerns regarding cumulative effects and increasing competition for marine space. However, there is limited evidence that these concerns have translated into project level measures capable of reducing cumulative fisheries pressures.

Accordingly, whilst consultation has clearly occurred, SFF does not consider that the EIAR demonstrates how fisheries concerns have materially altered project design, resulted in lower impact alternatives being selected, or reduced the anticipated impacts on commercial fisheries. SFF therefore considers that the consultation process appears largely procedural rather than outcome focused.

Site Selection and Alternatives[9]

The alternatives assessment does not demonstrate that impacts on commercial fisheries have been minimised through site selection, layout design or export cable routing. The assessment relies heavily on the conclusion that there are "only low levels of fishing activity across most of the ScotWind E3 Plan Option Area (E3 POA)[10]. However, the evidential basis for this conclusion is not transparently presented. The chapter

[9] Thistle Wind Partners (2026) Bowdun Offshore Wind Farm, Offshore EIA Report, Volume 1, Chapter 6: Site Selection and Consideration of Reasonable Alternatives (Document Ref. TWP-BOW-RPS-OFE-RPT-00006, April 2026)

[10] Scottish Government (2020). Sectoral Marine Plan for Offshore Wind Energy. Plan Option E3.

states that a desktop study using publicly available data was undertaken but provides limited information regarding the fisheries datasets used, their temporal coverage, gear specific activity patterns, seasonal variation or any associated limitations. Consequently, it is difficult to determine whether the conclusion that commercial fisheries represent a relatively low constraint is sufficiently robust.

Whilst the assessment acknowledges the potential for socio-economic impacts on commercial fisheries, fisheries considerations appear to have been treated as one of a number of human use constraints rather than as a determining factor in site selection. There is little evidence that fisheries impacts materially influenced the selection or rejection of site options or that alternative options were assessed primarily on the basis of reducing impacts on commercial fishing activity. In contrast, significant emphasis is placed throughout the chapter on engineering feasibility, constructability, grid connection, water depth, Annual Energy Production (AEP), Levelised Cost of Energy (LCOE) and project deliverability.

The Black, Red, Amber and Green (BRAG)[11] constraint assessment methodology also lacks transparency in relation to fisheries. Whilst the chapter describes the application of Black, Red, Amber and Green constraint categories, it does not clearly explain how fisheries constraints were weighted relative to engineering, environmental and economic considerations, nor how they influenced decision making. As a result, it is difficult to understand the role fisheries played in the final selection of the preferred development option.

The chapter concludes that the eastern part of the E3 Plan Option Area represented the "least constrained" area for development and was selected because it balanced environmental constraints, wind yield and project delivery considerations. However, the assessment does not clearly demonstrate that this conclusion applies to commercial fisheries, nor does it provide a comparative assessment of fisheries activity across alternative development areas sufficient to demonstrate that fisheries impacts have been minimised through site selection. In particular, the EIAR does not provide:

- a clear comparison of alternative locations based on fisheries impacts
- transparent weighting of fisheries constraints within the site selection process
- evidence that areas of higher fishing activity were avoided through project design
- fisheries specific optioneering exercises
- comparison of fisheries impacts between accepted and rejected options
- evidence that layout design was developed to minimise displacement or facilitate continued fishing activity.

Export cable routing appears to have been driven primarily by shortest route optimisation, engineering feasibility and environmental constraints. Although fisheries constraints are acknowledged, the EIAR does not demonstrate that route selection was undertaken to minimise impacts on commercial fishing activity, nor that alternative routes were comparatively assessed from a fisheries perspective. Shortest route optimisation should not be assumed to minimise disruption to fishing operations.

The assessment also provides limited evidence that impacts on inshore fishing activity, local fishing communities or fishing dependent businesses were considered as part of the landfall selection process. The rationale presented for landfall selection focuses predominantly on engineering feasibility, environmental constraints and consenting considerations, with comparatively little discussion of fisheries related outcomes. The preferred Benholm landfall is justified primarily on technical and consenting grounds rather than any demonstrated reduction in fisheries impacts.

SFF is further concerned by the reliance placed upon strategic planning processes, including the Sectoral Marine Plan and ScotWind site selection framework, as evidence that fisheries constraints have already been addressed. Whilst these processes provide a strategic context for development, they do not remove the need

[11] BRAG (Black, Red, Amber and Green) is a qualitative appraisal framework used to rank options according to levels of constraint or suitability, with Black generally indicating a fatal flaw or showstopper constraint, Red a major constraint, Amber a moderate constraint, and Green a preferred or least-constrained option.

to demonstrate project level avoidance and minimisation of fisheries impacts through site selection and design.

Consequently, SFF does not consider that the EIAR demonstrates compliance with the requirement to assess reasonable alternatives in relation to commercial fisheries. The assessment provides insufficient evidence that fisheries considerations materially influenced the selection of the array area, project layout, export cable routing or landfall location.

Physical Processes [12]

Chapter 7 identifies a highly dynamic seabed environment characterised by:

- mobile sediments
- active sediment transport processes
- sandwaves and seabed mobility
- heterogeneous ground conditions
- thin and variable sediment cover across parts of the Proposed Development
- ongoing natural seabed change

The assessment also identifies substantial seabed disturbance associated with construction activities, including trenching, sandwave clearance and sediment redistribution. Sediment transport modelling indicates that disturbed material may be transported over kilometre scale distances, whilst some seabed features created during construction may persist for extended periods. Despite these findings, the assessment concludes that impacts on physical processes will generally be of negligible or low magnitude and not significant.

SFF notes that the assessment relies heavily upon assumptions regarding successful cable burial, cable protection measures and long-term infrastructure stability despite the identification of mobile sediments, active seabed reworking processes and areas where unconsolidated sediment cover may be limited. SFF considers that these findings create uncertainty regarding the confidence that can be placed in assumptions of long-term cable stability.

The Technical Assessment notes that surficial unconsolidated sediments are commonly between 0 m and 2 m thick and may be absent in some areas. Together with the identification of mobile sediments, active seabed reworking processes and conditions capable of contributing to cable exposure, these findings introduce uncertainty regarding achievable burial depths and the long-term stability of buried infrastructure. Confidence in long-term cable performance therefore relies substantially on post-consent measures, including the Cable Burial Risk Assessment (CBRA), monitoring and potential remedial intervention.

The physical processes assessment therefore introduces uncertainty regarding:

- long-term cable stability
- cable exposure and re-exposure
- the extent of future cable protection requirements
- the frequency of future maintenance and reburial activities
- the potential implications of these issues for fishing activity and gear interactions.

SFF notes that the assessment does not provide a quantitative evaluation of cable burial success, re-exposure probability or long-term cable stability over the operational life of the Proposed Development within the Physical Processes assessment. Given the physically dynamic nature of the receiving environment, SFF

[12] Thistle Wind Partners (2026) Bowdun Offshore Wind Farm, Offshore EIA Report, Volume 2, Chapter 7: Physical Processes (Document Ref. TWP-BOW-RPS-OFE-RPT-00011, April 2026); and Thistle Wind Partners (2026). Bowdun Offshore Wind Farm, Offshore EIA Report, Volume 3, Technical Appendix 7.2: Model Design and Validation (Document Ref. TWP-BOW-RPS-OFE-RPT-00076, April 2026); and Thistle Wind Partners (2026). Bowdun Offshore Wind Farm, Offshore EIA Report, Volume 3, Technical Appendix 7.3: Physical Processes Technical Assessment (Document Ref. TWP-BOW-RPS-OFE-RPT-00077, April 2026)

considers this to be a significant evidential gap when considering future cable fisheries interactions. SFF considers that these uncertainties are not adequately reflected within subsequent fisheries assessments.

SFF also notes a number of limitations within the physical processes modelling which collectively reduce confidence in predictions of long-term seabed behaviour and infrastructure performance. The Technical Assessment acknowledges limitations associated with the physical processes modelling, including model resolutions that do not fully resolve localised seabed processes occurring in the immediate vicinity of infrastructure. SFF does not consider that these limitations are adequately reflected in the confidence applied to subsequent impact conclusions. The Technical Assessment further confirms that the hydrodynamic modelling was undertaken using a depth averaged model operating in tide only mode and does not include wind forcing, storm surge effects or atmospheric pressure influences. SFF notes that these factors are recognised drivers of sediment transport and seabed change within offshore environments. Consequently, the assessment may not fully capture the range of conditions capable of influencing cable burial performance, sediment mobility and infrastructure stability.

SFF further notes that the sediment transport modelling does not appear to simulate the re-erosion of deposited sediments following settlement. Given that the assessment characterises the receiving environment as being subject to ongoing seabed reworking, SFF considers that this modelling assumption may affect predictions of sediment redistribution, recovery and longer-term seabed behaviour.
SFF further notes that model simulations were undertaken over relatively short representative periods, whilst conclusions are subsequently drawn regarding longer-term seabed behaviour, recovery and infrastructure performance over the operational lifetime of the project. SFF does not consider that the implications of this temporal mismatch are fully reflected in the assessment conclusions.

The assessment also relies upon wave modelling outputs that are subject to a lower level of site specific validation. SFF therefore considers that some uncertainty remains regarding the interaction between wave conditions, sediment mobility and longer-term seabed change within the Proposed Development area.

The chapter recognises that cable repair, maintenance and potential reburial activities may be required during the operational life of the Proposed Development. SFF notes that such activities have the potential to result in recurring seabed disturbance throughout the operational life of the Proposed Development rather than a single construction phase impact. Consequently, interactions between project infrastructure, seabed processes and fishing activity may persist over extended timescales and cannot be characterised solely as short-term construction effects.

In addition, extensive cable protection and associated seabed modification may be required where target burial depths cannot be achieved. Chapter 7 assumes that up to 50% of cable lengths may require protection, with structures up to 10 m wide and 2 m high. The assessment indicates that scour protection measures would likely be required to manage localised seabed change, although the precise extent, location and configuration of such measures remain uncertain at this stage. Whilst these measures are presented as standard engineering solutions, they introduce long-term physical modifications to the seabed that may affect the operation of mobile fishing gear and alter the character of established fishing grounds.

The chapter further acknowledges potential cumulative changes arising from multiple offshore wind developments and cable systems. However, cumulative effects are ultimately assessed as negligible or minor. SFF notes that the cumulative modelling remains focused on selected developments and scenarios and does not include regional scale modelling of cumulative seabed alteration arising from the full range of existing and proposed offshore developments. SFF therefore considers that cumulative physical pressures may not have been fully characterised from a fisheries perspective.

SFF also notes that aspects of the cumulative modelling rely upon assumed infrastructure layouts for neighbouring developments where project specific design information was unavailable at the time of modelling. This introduces an additional source of uncertainty into the cumulative assessment.

Whilst the chapter identifies implications for future cable performance and intervention requirements, the consequences of these processes for commercial fisheries, including cable exposure, snagging risk and operational safety, are not meaningfully assessed within Chapter 13. SFF considers that the implications of these findings are not fully reflected within the Commercial Fisheries assessment.

Overall, SFF considers that Chapter 7 identifies a physically dynamic and complex receiving environment which introduces significant uncertainty regarding cable burial performance, cable exposure risk, long-term infrastructure stability and future intervention requirements. These uncertainties are compounded by limitations within the underlying modelling, including simplified representation of physical processes, limited site specific validation and assumptions regarding sediment behaviour. SFF therefore considers that the assessment provides a less certain basis for conclusions regarding future fisheries interactions than is reflected elsewhere in the EIAR.

Fish and Shellfish Ecology [13]

SFF notes that the ecological assessment confirms overlap between the Proposed Development and spawning and nursery habitats associated with a number of commercially important species, including cod, haddock, whiting, herring and sandeel. These species are recognised within the assessment as Important Ecological Features (IEFs) and form an important component of both commercial fisheries and the wider marine ecosystem.

SFF further notes that the assessment identifies overlap with sandeel habitat, including areas suitable for spawning and other key life history functions, as well as overlap with high intensity sandeel spawning habitat and herring spawning habitat within the wider area. Given the recognised dependence of these species on specific sediment characteristics and suitable seabed habitats, SFF considers that the potential consequences of seabed disturbance and underwater noise warrant particular consideration.

The chapter also identifies a number of receptors with recognised conservation importance, including Priority Marine Features and species subject to wider conservation concern. SFF notes that this further reinforces the ecological sensitivity of the receiving environment.

The assessment also identifies significant adverse impacts on herring arising from piling activities prior to the application of mitigation measures. Herring is the only fish receptor for which piling effects are assessed as moderate adverse and significant prior to mitigation. However, these effects are subsequently reduced to minor significance following the application of mitigation measures, including noise mitigation and timing related controls.

SFF also notes that several of the species identified within the assessment, including herring and sandeel, perform an important forage fish function within the wider marine ecosystem. Disturbance to these species has the potential to affect ecological relationships beyond the individual receptors assessed. However, the assessment principally considers effects at the level of individual receptors and provides limited consideration of potential wider ecosystem level implications. SFF considers that there is a recurring tension throughout the chapter between the recognised ecological sensitivity of receptors, the acknowledged uncertainties within the evidence base and the generally limited significance assigned to project impacts.

The assessment further acknowledges that underwater noise generated during construction may affect fish over substantial distances, with behavioural disturbance predicted to extend over tens of kilometres. Despite

[13] Thistle Wind Partners (2026) Bowdun Offshore Wind Farm, Offshore EIA Report, Volume 2, Chapter 9: Fish and Shellfish Ecology (Document Ref. TWP-BOW-RPS-OFE-RPT-00072, April 2026); and Thistle Wind Partners (2026). Bowdun Offshore Wind Farm, Offshore EIA Report, Volume 3, Technical Appendix 9.1: Fish and Shellfish Ecology Technical Report (Document Ref. TWP-BOW-RPS-OFE-RPT-00073, April 2026); and Thistle Wind Partners (2026). Bowdun Offshore Wind Farm, Offshore EIA Report, Volume 3, Technical Appendix 10.4: Subsea Noise Technical Report (Document Ref. TWP-BOW-RPS-OFE-RPT-00015, April 2026)

this, the majority of noise related effects are ultimately assessed as minor or not significant. SFF considers that the scale of predicted disturbance is not fully reflected in the conclusions reached.

SFF notes that a number of aspects of the baseline are characterised by acknowledged uncertainty, including the effects of electromagnetic fields (EMF), understanding of diadromous fish behaviour, historic datasets, habitat modelling and limited site specific survey evidence. The assessment recognises uncertainty regarding the effects of EMF on sensitive species, including migratory and elasmobranch species, and acknowledges limitations in the understanding of diadromous fish movements and behaviour. Consultees, including Fisheries Management Scotland and Scottish Ministers, highlighted evidence gaps and cautioned against assuming no impact simply because evidence is lacking. This concern is particularly relevant in relation to EMF effects, where the assessment acknowledges continuing limitations in the scientific understanding of receptor responses, including migratory and elasmobranch species, yet nevertheless concludes that effects are minor or not significant without clearly demonstrating how the acknowledged uncertainty has been reflected within the significance evaluation. SFF does not consider that the level of uncertainty identified is fully reflected in the significance conclusions.

SFF further notes that elements of the baseline rely upon historic datasets, habitat models and information sources that are subject to acknowledged uncertainty regarding species distribution, habitat utilisation and population dynamics. Whilst these limitations are recognised within the assessment, SFF does not consider that the resulting uncertainty is fully reflected in subsequent impact conclusions.

SFF also notes that parts of the herring baseline rely on dated references and historical commentary which are of limited relevance when considered against the most recent ICES assessments and advice. Whilst this does not materially affect SFF's concerns regarding project related fish and shellfish impacts, baseline characterisation should be based on the most current scientific evidence available.

SFF also notes that parts of the baseline characterisation rely on relatively limited site specific survey evidence supplemented by wider regional datasets and habitat suitability modelling. Site specific DDV surveys recorded only a limited number of fish and shellfish observations, with the wider baseline relying substantially on supplementary data sources. Whilst this approach is commonly applied within marine assessments, it introduces additional uncertainty regarding the distribution and use of habitats within the Proposed Development area.

In addition, significant areas of temporary and permanent habitat disturbance are identified, including approximately 19.4 km² of temporary habitat disturbance and 2.25 km² of long-term habitat loss or disturbance. Despite this, the assessment concludes that associated ecological effects will generally be minor. SFF considers that the implications of habitat loss and disturbance for seabed dependent species and fisheries productivity may therefore be underestimated. However, there is limited integration between the ecological assessment and the uncertainties identified within the Physical Processes assessment regarding sediment mobility, seabed change and long-term seabed stability, despite the dependence of key receptors such as herring and sandeel on specific seabed characteristics. SFF does not consider that the implications of this interaction are fully explored within the assessment.

The chapter also acknowledges the potential for cumulative effects arising from multiple offshore wind developments and associated cable infrastructure. Whilst a cumulative assessment has been undertaken, SFF notes that cumulative effects are largely considered through individual impact pathways and receptor groups. SFF therefore considers that there remains limited consideration of potential cumulative implications for spawning stock productivity, fish population dynamics and longer-term fisheries productivity. Cumulative effects are ultimately concluded to be minor or negligible.

Overall, SFF considers that Chapter 9 identifies a number of ecologically important receptors, including commercially important fish species, spawning and nursery habitats, and species of recognised conservation importance. Whilst the assessment acknowledges uncertainty regarding habitat use, population dynamics

and species responses to disturbance, impacts are frequently reduced through assumptions regarding mitigation effectiveness, recovery and limited population level consequences. SFF therefore remains concerned that the assessment may not fully capture the potential implications for commercially and ecologically important fish and shellfish resources, and that the ecological sensitivity identified within Chapter 9 is not fully reflected elsewhere in the EIAR.

Commercial Fisheries [14]

SFF notes that the chapter 13 concludes that all project alone effects on fisheries are minor adverse or negligible and therefore not significant. However, these conclusions do not appear consistent with the evidence presented.

The assessment repeatedly relies upon the conclusion that fishing activity within the project area is limited or of relatively low intensity. However, the chapter simultaneously identifies commercially important fisheries and substantial economic value associated with fishing activity in the wider area, including approximately £6.5 million annual local value and approximately £31 million annual regional value, together with important scallop dredge, demersal trawl and creel fisheries. The Commercial Fisheries Technical Report similarly identifies commercial fisheries as an important component of the regional economy, including scallop, lobster, crab and demersal fisheries. SFF considers that these findings are difficult to reconcile with repeated references elsewhere in the assessment to limited or low intensity fishing activity. SFF does not consider that these findings can be readily reconciled and is concerned that the assessment relies upon a characterisation of fisheries activity which may underestimate the importance of fishing activity within areas affected by the Proposed Development.

The assessment acknowledges displacement as a key impact pathway. However:

- no project specific displacement modelling has been undertaken
- no assessment of alternative ground capacity has been provided
- no redistribution modelling has been undertaken
- no assessment of secondary displacement effects has been provided.

Instead, the assessment largely assumes that fishing activity can relocate elsewhere. SFF does not consider this assumption to be evidence based. The Commercial Fisheries Technical Report recognises displacement as a potential consequence of development and references broader displacement processes affecting the fishing industry. However, no project specific displacement modelling, effort redistribution analysis, spatial capacity assessment or evaluation of secondary displacement effects has been undertaken. Consequently, the assessment does not demonstrate that displaced fishing effort can be successfully accommodated within alternative fishing grounds, nor does it assess the increased competition, gear conflict and operational pressures that may arise where effort is redistributed into already utilised areas.

The assessment identifies significant fishing activity within the Export Cable Corridor, including scallop dredging activity offshore and static gear fisheries in nearshore areas. Despite this, impacts associated with cable installation, protection, maintenance and long-term interaction with fishing activity are consistently assigned low magnitude and minor significance ratings. The Applicant's own spatial analysis demonstrates direct overlap between the Export Cable Corridor and commercially important fishing grounds, including scallop dredge, demersal trawl and static gear fisheries. SFF considers that the Export Cable Corridor represents the principal fisheries interaction pathway for the project. Given the scale of cable infrastructure proposed and the extent of fishing activity identified within the corridor, the assessment does not provide a convincing justification for the low significance conclusions reached.

[14] Thistle Wind Partners (2026) Bowdun Offshore Wind Farm, Offshore EIA Report, Volume 2, Chapter 13: Commercial Fisheries (Document Ref. TWP-BOW-RPS-OFE-RPT-00029, April 2026); and Thistle Wind Partners (2026). Bowdun Offshore Wind Farm, Offshore EIA Report, Volume 3, Technical Appendix 13.1: Commercial Fisheries Technical Report (Document Ref. TWP-BOW-RPS-OFE-RPT-00028, April 2026)

The fisheries assessment relies heavily upon assumptions regarding successful burial and fisheries compatibility. However, elsewhere in the EIAR:

- burial success remains uncertain
- up to 50% cable protection may be required
- cable crossings create elevated structures
- annual intervention activities are anticipated.

The assessment therefore appears to evaluate an idealised cable scenario rather than the realistic project envelope. Furthermore, no evidence is presented demonstrating that trawling, dredging or other mobile fishing activities can safely and effectively continue in areas where cables are partially buried, protected or subject to recurring inspection and repair activities.

The assessment consistently characterises snagging and gear interaction risks as low magnitude effects. However, cable interaction is not solely an economic issue. The snagging of fishing gear on subsea infrastructure can have serious safety implications for vessel crews and has long been recognised by the fishing industry as a significant operational hazard. SFF notes that the chapter treats snagging predominantly as an economic and operational issue associated with loss or damage to fishing gear. Whilst the EIAR addresses certain safety matters within Chapter 14 (Shipping and Navigation), SFF considers that the potential safety implications of cable interaction remain highly relevant to the assessment of fisheries impacts and should materially influence the significance assigned to snagging related effects. Consequently, SFF considers that the significance assigned to snagging related effects may be understated.

The sensitivity of affected fleets appears underestimated. Commercial fishing activity is often highly spatially constrained, gear specific and economically dependent on access to particular grounds. As a result, assumptions regarding adaptability and recoverability may not be appropriate. The assessment framework also appears to set a particularly high threshold before impacts are assigned moderate or major magnitude. This risks underestimating the significance of disruptions that may be operationally significant for affected fishing businesses despite being characterised as low magnitude within the assessment. SFF does not consider that the resulting significance conclusions logically follow from the scale and duration of the project, the acknowledged potential for displacement, uncertainty regarding cable interaction and the economic importance of affected fisheries.

The assessment places considerable reliance on measures including Fisheries Management and Mitigation Communication Plans, liaison arrangements and disruption agreements. SFF notes that financial compensation arrangements for damaged fishing gear and disruption agreements associated with construction activities may address certain direct economic losses experienced by affected fishing businesses during the construction phase but do not reduce or remove the underlying environmental or operational impacts. Furthermore, such arrangements do not generally address longer-term impacts associated with loss of access, displacement or operational restrictions during the operational and decommissioning phases of the project. Whilst such arrangements may have a role in addressing specific economic losses, they should not be relied upon as evidence that the impacts themselves have been mitigated. Similarly, the effectiveness of embedded mitigation measures, including cable burial and future fisheries management arrangements is assumed rather than demonstrated.

SFF notes that the assessment identifies moderate cumulative effects for certain fleet sectors, including demersal trawl and scallop dredge fisheries, before the application of mitigation measures. However, these effects are subsequently reduced through reliance upon broad management measures, industry collaboration and future fisheries plans. The assessment does not demonstrate how such measures will materially reduce regional displacement pressures, loss of fishing opportunity or increasing competition for marine space. Consequently, SFF does not consider that cumulative fisheries impacts have been meaningfully mitigated.

The Commercial Fisheries Technical Report acknowledges substantial limitations in the underlying fisheries datasets. In particular:

- VMS and AIS datasets do not fully capture vessels under 12–15 m in length
- under-10 m activity is represented primarily through proxy datasets, sales note information and self-reported positional information
- some fisheries data are spatially aggregated at ICES rectangle scale
- several datasets are assessed as being of medium confidence and subject to varying levels of uncertainty
- elements of the baseline rely on historic datasets and inferred fishing activity.

Whilst these limitations are recognised, the assessment nevertheless concludes that they do not materially affect the reliability of the assessment. SFF does not consider this conclusion to be adequately justified, particularly given that some of the fleets most likely to interact with the Export Cable Corridor are disproportionately represented by smaller vessels and static gear fisheries that are less comprehensively captured within the principal spatial datasets. The Technical Report itself notes that mapped inshore activity may appear lower than actual fishing activity because principal spatial datasets do not fully represent smaller vessels operating in these areas. SFF considers that this limitation is particularly relevant when assessing potential interactions with static gear fisheries and other inshore fishing activity associated with the Export Cable Corridor.

The Commercial Fisheries Technical Report acknowledges that fishing activity is already subject to change in response to regulatory measures, market conditions and wider environmental pressures. The report notes changing fishing patterns and existing displacement pressures affecting parts of the fishing industry. However, these sources of uncertainty do not appear to have been incorporated into the assessment of future fisheries displacement or the availability of alternative fishing grounds. SFF considers that assumptions regarding the future adaptability of fishing activity are less robust where the baseline itself is acknowledged to be dynamic and subject to ongoing change.

SFF considers that Chapter 13 systematically underestimates the scale and significance of impacts on commercial fisheries. The assessment relies heavily on assumptions regarding adaptation, successful cable burial, fisheries compatibility and mitigation effectiveness, despite substantial uncertainty elsewhere within the EIAR. The chapter does not provide sufficient evidence to demonstrate that displaced fishing effort can be accommodated elsewhere, that long-term coexistence with the proposed cable infrastructure is achievable without material consequences for fishing activity, or that cumulative fisheries pressures can be meaningfully mitigated. Accordingly, SFF does not consider that the conclusion that all project alone fisheries effects are minor adverse or negligible is adequately supported by the evidence presented.

Shipping and Navigation [15]

Chapter 14 provides important context regarding wider spatial pressures within the region. The assessment acknowledges:

- displacement of vessels from existing routes and operating areas
- route deviation and changes in vessel behaviour
- cumulative congestion arising from multiple offshore developments
- increasing competition for marine space;
- stakeholder concerns regarding spatial squeeze, limited available space and navigational complexity.

Stakeholder concerns regarding restricted sea space, cumulative development, fishing vessel displacement and changing navigational conditions are documented throughout the chapter and associated consultation process. Despite this, the assessment consistently concludes that impacts are minor adverse and not

[15] Thistle Wind Partners (2026) Bowdun Offshore Wind Farm, Offshore EIA Report, Volume 2, Chapter 14: Shipping and Navigation (Document Ref. TWP-BOW-RPS-OFE-RPT-00031, April 2026); and Thistle Wind Partners (2026). Bowdun Offshore Wind Farm Offshore EIA Report, Volume 3, Technical Appendix 14.1: Shipping and Navigation Navigational Risk Assessment (Document Ref. TWP-BOW-RPS-OFE-RPT-00030, April 2026)

significant, or that navigational risks remain tolerable and As Low As Reasonably Practicable (ALARP). SFF notes that ALARP does not eliminate risk but rather accepts that residual risks remain following the application of mitigation measures.

A particularly important inconsistency arises in relation to displacement. The navigation chapter explicitly recognises that the Proposed Development may result in route deviation, altered vessel behaviour and displacement from existing operating areas. The chapter also acknowledges that increasing offshore development contributes to cumulative congestion and reduced flexibility in how marine space is utilised. However, whilst displacement is acknowledged and route deviations are assessed, limited assessment is provided regarding:

- where displaced activity may relocate
- the capacity of alternative areas to accommodate additional users
- the interaction between displaced activities
- the cumulative consequences of displacement across multiple developments.

SFF does not consider that displacement can be treated as a minor effect where the consequences of redistribution have not been meaningfully assessed. Furthermore, the chapter ultimately assesses route deviation and displacement effects as minor adverse on the basis that sufficient sea room remains available. By contrast, Chapter 13 similarly concludes that fisheries displacement effects are limited despite fishing activity being more dependent on access to particular grounds than navigational passage. SFF considers these conclusions difficult to reconcile.

The Navigational Risk Assessment identifies cable interaction and gear snagging as a potential hazard for fishing vessels, particularly during construction and where subsea infrastructure may interact with fishing activity. The assessment relies upon cable burial and, where burial is not feasible, the use of cable protection to reduce this risk. However, as discussed elsewhere in this response, burial success remains uncertain and the extent of cable protection required will not be fully determined until post-consent assessment has been completed. SFF therefore considers that the assessment relies upon mitigation measures whose effectiveness has not yet been demonstrated, whilst simultaneously concluding that the resulting risk is acceptable. This creates a degree of inconsistency between the identified hazard and the confidence placed in the proposed mitigation measures.

The chapter repeatedly concludes that displacement effects are manageable because sufficient sea room exists for vessels to alter routes and continue operating safely. SFF notes that this assumption may be appropriate for transiting vessels whose primary objective is to move between destinations. However, the concept of "adequate sea room" is not directly transferable to commercial fishing activity, which depends on access to specific fishing grounds and cannot simply relocate to alternative areas without economic and operational consequences. Accordingly, the availability of navigable sea space should not be treated as evidence that fisheries displacement effects are insignificant.

The chapter identifies numerous existing, consented and planned offshore wind developments and transmission projects within the wider region. SFF considers that the resulting increase in offshore infrastructure, vessel activity and navigational constraints represents a material cumulative pressure on marine space. Whilst the assessment acknowledges cumulative congestion, route deviation and displacement arising from multiple offshore developments, the cumulative assessment remains largely qualitative in nature.

The Navigational Risk Assessment records stakeholder concerns that future offshore developments may materially alter navigational risk profiles, traffic patterns and the availability of sea space. However, no quantitative cumulative modelling has been undertaken to assess how multiple developments acting together may influence displacement, routeing behaviour, competition for marine space or interactions between marine users. Consequently, SFF does not consider that cumulative spatial pressures have been fully evaluated, particularly in relation to fishing vessel displacement and competition for available sea space.

The chapter primarily considers fishing vessels as navigation receptors and as part of the wider category of "small vessel activity". Whilst this is understandable given the focus of the chapter, it does not fully reflect the operational and economic dependence of fishing businesses on continued access to specific fishing grounds. As a result, the assessment may understate the sensitivity of commercial fisheries when considering displacement, route deviation and increasing competition for marine space.

SFF also notes that the Navigational Risk Assessment relies extensively on AIS data, whilst acknowledging that smaller vessels, including a proportion of fishing vessels, may be underrepresented within the available datasets. Given that commercial fishing activity comprises a significant proportion of smaller vessel operations within the region, SFF considers that this limitation introduces additional uncertainty regarding the assessment of navigation risk, vessel interactions and displacement effects affecting fishing activity.

Chapter 14 provides further evidence that sea space within the region is becoming increasingly constrained through the combined effects of offshore wind development, transmission infrastructure and associated vessel activity. Whilst the chapter acknowledges displacement, route deviation, cumulative congestion and cable related hazards affecting fishing vessels, these effects are generally concluded to be minor adverse on the basis of assumed mitigation measures, future management controls and the availability of alternative sea room. SFF does not consider that these conclusions fully reflect the spatial pressures identified within the assessment, particularly where fishing activity depends upon continued access to specific grounds rather than simply the availability of navigable space. Accordingly, SFF considers that displacement, cumulative spatial squeeze, vessel interaction risks and cable related hazards have been recognised within the EIAR but not robustly assessed from a commercial fisheries perspective.

Infrastructure and Other Users [16]

Chapter 16 confirms the extensive scale of subsea infrastructure associated with the Proposed Development, including:

- approximately 151 km of inter-array cables
- approximately 36 km of interconnector cables
- up to 210 km of export cables
- cable crossings assessed within the project design envelope
- annual intervention, repair and reburial activities
- recurring disturbance of the seabed throughout the operational lifetime of the project.

SFF considers that this chapter reinforces the conclusion that the principal fisheries interaction pathway associated with the Proposed Development is not the wind turbines themselves but the extensive network of subsea cables and associated protection measures.

The chapter confirms that operational activities may include recurring cable inspection, repair and reburial works throughout the lifetime of the project, including annual intervention requirements along both inter-array and export cable routes. These activities indicate that interaction between fisheries and project infrastructure will not be limited to a temporary construction phase but may continue throughout project operation. SFF therefore considers that the assessment understates the extent to which fishing activity may be subject to repeated disruption, restriction and uncertainty over the lifetime of the development.

The chapter also relies upon the use of safety zones around construction, maintenance and repair activities, including rolling safety zones associated with vessel operations. Whilst individually temporary, these restrictions have the potential to create recurring and intermittent exclusions from fishing activity within both the Array Area and Export Cable Corridor. The assessment does not clearly demonstrate how the

[16] Thistle Wind Partners (2026) Bowdun Offshore Wind Farm, Offshore EIA Report, Volume 2, Chapter 14: Shipping and Navigation (Document Ref. TWP-BOW-RPS-OFE-RPT-00031, April 2026)

cumulative operational effect of these recurring restrictions on commercial fishing activity has been evaluated.

Many of the measures identified within Chapter 16 comprise:

- Notices to Mariner
- Kingfisher bulletins
- liaison arrangements
- crossing agreements
- proximity agreements
- communication procedures.

SFF recognises that these measures may assist coordination between marine users. However, they do not reduce the underlying physical interaction risks associated with cables, cable protection, cable crossings or recurring maintenance activities.
Consequently, SFF does not consider that the provision of information and communication measures alone can be relied upon to mitigate physical fisheries impacts.

The chapter repeatedly concludes that displacement effects are limited because marine users can alter routes and utilise alternative areas given the "adequate sea room" available around the Proposed Development. However, no assessment is provided regarding:

- the capacity of alternative fishing grounds
- the potential for increased competition between fishing businesses
- gear conflict arising from displacement
- the cumulative effects of multiple developments upon available fishing space.

This is of particular concern given the concentration of existing, consented and proposed offshore wind developments in the wider region, including nearby projects such as Morven and Ossian, which may further reduce the availability of alternative fishing grounds and increase pressure on those areas that remain accessible to commercial fisheries. The assessment itself identifies Morven North approximately 10 km from the Array Area and Ossian approximately 25 km from the Array Area, alongside numerous other existing, consented and proposed offshore wind developments in the region.

Whilst commercial fisheries are assessed separately within Chapter 13, the assumptions regarding displacement presented within Chapter 16 are consistent with the wider EIAR assumption that displacement effects are readily manageable despite limited supporting evidence. SFF therefore remains concerned that the ability of alternative areas to accommodate displaced fishing activity has been assumed rather than demonstrated.

The chapter identifies existing and planned transmission infrastructure within the region, including EGL2, EGL3 and numerous offshore wind developments and associated transmission assets. SFF considers that the increasing density of offshore infrastructure and transmission assets represents a material cumulative issue for commercial fisheries. Whilst the assessment concludes that cumulative effects remain minor, it does not demonstrate how increasing seabed congestion, reduced flexibility in fishing operations and cumulative displacement pressures have been evaluated from a commercial fisheries perspective.

Chapter 16 raises a number of concerns regarding consistency across the EIAR. In particular:

- Chapter 3 identifies uncertainty regarding cable burial success and acknowledges extensive cable protection may be required, whereas Chapter 16 generally assumes that infrastructure can coexist with other seabed users without significant difficulty
- Chapter 13 concludes that displacement, snagging risk and cable interaction effects are generally minor adverse, whereas Chapter 16 confirms extensive cable infrastructure, recurring maintenance activities and ongoing interaction with fishing operations

- the assessment of decommissioning assumes total removal of buried cables and cable protection for the purposes of the Maximum Design Scenario. SFF notes that this assumption does not appear fully aligned with the uncertainty identified elsewhere within the EIAR regarding the future treatment of subsea cables and associated infrastructure.

These inconsistencies reduce confidence in the conclusions reached regarding fisheries impacts. SFF considers that Chapter 16 demonstrates that the project will introduce a substantial long-term network of seabed infrastructure within an area utilised by commercial fisheries. The scale of infrastructure, recurring maintenance requirements, reliance upon procedural mitigation measures and increasing regional cable congestion do not readily support the conclusion that fisheries impacts are uniformly minor in nature. Rather, the chapter provides further evidence that fisheries interactions may extend throughout the operational life of the project and could result in cumulative pressures when considered alongside the concerns identified in Chapters 3, 6 and 13.

Socioeconomics [17]

SFF notes a clear imbalance in the treatment of project benefits and fisheries impacts. Renewable energy benefits are described through detailed assessments of:

- employment
- Gross Value Added (GVA)
- supply chain activity
- investment effects
- economic multipliers.

By contrast, impacts on commercial fisheries are largely qualitative in nature and are primarily considered through cross-reference to the Commercial Fisheries assessment rather than through detailed economic analysis. The assessment does not provide a detailed economic quantification of:

- loss of fishing opportunity
- displacement effects
- loss of access to fishing grounds
- additional operating costs
- wider consequences for fishing dependent businesses and communities.

As a result, economic benefits are assessed through detailed quantitative modelling, while fisheries impacts rely to a greater extent on qualitative assessment, aggregation and professional judgement.

SFF also notes that the socio-economic assessment relies upon a series of assumptions regarding future project expenditure, supply chain participation and the geographic distribution of project spending. The methodology acknowledges that detailed project expenditure estimates are not yet available and that projected economic benefits are therefore derived from modelled expenditure scenarios rather than confirmed contracts or procurement commitments. Consequently, a substantial proportion of the reported employment, GVA and supply chain benefits remain dependent upon assumptions regarding future expenditure, procurement decisions and supply chain participation. SFF therefore considers that this uncertainty should be given appropriate weight when comparing projected benefits with impacts experienced by existing marine industries.

SFF also notes that the socio-economic assessment is undertaken for the Project as a whole and does not disaggregate economic impacts between offshore and onshore elements. This limits the ability to compare the economic benefits arising specifically from offshore development activities with the economic impacts experienced by offshore industries such as commercial fisheries. Consequently, it is difficult to determine the

[17] Thistle Wind Partners (2026). Bowdun Offshore Wind Farm, Offshore EIA Report, Volume 2, Chapter 18: Socio-Economics, Tourism and Recreation (Document Ref. TWP-BOW-JCB-ENV-RPT-00015, April 2026); and Bowdun Offshore Wind Farm, Offshore EIA Report
Volume 2, Appendix 18.2: Socio-Economics Quantitative Assessment Methodology
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extent to which projected offshore economic benefits offset or outweigh impacts on existing offshore economic activity.

The assessment also presents an "Ambitions" scenario based upon increased levels of UK and Scottish supply chain participation aligned with wider policy aspirations. SFF notes that these assumptions represent desired outcomes rather than secured commitments and therefore introduce additional uncertainty into the reported economic benefits.

The projected socio-economic benefits are heavily dependent upon the application of indirect and induced economic multipliers. Whilst such approaches are commonly used within economic assessment, they rely upon assumptions regarding the extent to which expenditure circulates through local and regional economies. The assessment does not appear to fully account for wider factors that may influence the extent to which projected benefits are ultimately realised, including competition for labour and resources, constraints within supply chains and the cumulative effects of multiple offshore developments progressing concurrently.

The assessment acknowledges that fishing activity may be displaced by the Proposed Development. However, no detailed economic valuation is provided for the consequences of that displacement. In particular, the assessment does not quantify:

- the value of lost catches
- additional operational costs associated with displacement
- potential reductions in fishing efficiency
- increased competition within remaining fishing grounds
- wider economic consequences for fishing businesses arising from redistribution of fishing effort.

SFF considers that displacement effects cannot be robustly assessed where the associated economic consequences have not been quantified.

The chapter acknowledges cumulative pressures on certain fishing fleets, including demersal and scallop fisheries. The chapter also acknowledges cumulative impacts affecting these sectors and notes moderate adverse cumulative effects identified through the Commercial Fisheries assessment. However, the socio-economic assessment concludes that no significant cumulative effects on fishing related employment, supply chains or community livelihoods are expected. SFF does not consider that this conclusion is adequately supported where no economic modelling has been undertaken to assess the combined consequences of reduced access, displaced effort, additional operating costs and cumulative loss of fishing opportunity arising from multiple developments.

SFF also notes that the methodology does not include a specific assessment of cumulative pressures on labour markets, supply chains, port infrastructure or specialist marine services arising from multiple offshore wind developments progressing concurrently within the region. Consequently, the assessment does not evaluate whether projected economic benefits may be affected by competition for resources between projects.

Commercial fishing forms an established component of the regional economy and is recognised elsewhere within the EIAR as an important marine industry and primary economic sector. However, fisheries are not assessed with the same level of economic scrutiny applied to offshore wind benefits. Whilst the economic value of commercial fisheries activity is identified elsewhere within the EIAR, those values are not incorporated into the socio-economic assessment framework. As a result, the assessment does not provide a balanced comparison between projected economic gains and potential losses affecting existing marine industries. SFF considers that this results in fisheries being treated as a secondary economic receptor despite the sector's importance to coastal communities and the regional economy.

Mitigation measures identified within the chapter include fisheries liaison arrangements, Fisheries Mitigation and Monitoring Communication Plans (FMMCPs) and disruption agreements. Whilst such measures may

assist communication between the developer and the fishing industry, they do not reduce the underlying causes of impact, including displacement, loss of access to fishing grounds and wider operational constraints on fishing activity. SFF therefore does not consider that liaison or compensation based measures should be relied upon as evidence that fisheries impacts have been effectively mitigated.

The assessment generally assumes that fisheries impacts are temporary or principally associated with construction activities. However, Chapters 13, 14 and 16 identify ongoing interaction between commercial fisheries and project infrastructure, including long-term displacement pressures, cable infrastructure, recurring maintenance activities and increasing spatial competition within the wider region. SFF therefore considers that the assumption that fisheries impacts are primarily temporary is not fully aligned with the wider evidence presented elsewhere in the EIAR.

Chapter 18 demonstrates a clear distinction between the treatment of projected project benefits and impacts on commercial fisheries. Whilst detailed modelling is undertaken for employment, GVA, expenditure and supply chain effects, the economic consequences for commercial fisheries are largely addressed qualitatively and rely heavily on cross-reference to the Commercial Fisheries assessment. SFF considers that this approach may place greater evidential weight on projected economic benefits than on impacts experienced by existing marine industries. Consequently, SFF does not consider that Chapter 18 provides a sufficiently robust assessment of the overall socio-economic consequences of the Proposed Development, particularly where fisheries impacts such as displacement, loss of access, additional operating costs and cumulative pressures are not assessed using an equivalent analytical framework.

Inter-Related Effects [18]

A key purpose of Chapter 23 is to identify whether multiple impacts interact in a way that results in effects greater than those identified through individual topic assessments. Instead, the assessment appears largely to conclude that because individual effects are assessed as minor, combined effects must also be minor. SFF does not consider that this approach adequately captures the potential for multiple pressures to interact and collectively increase the significance of impacts experienced by commercial fisheries. The assessment relies predominantly on qualitative judgement, review of topic specific chapters and professional interpretation of existing conclusions, rather than detailed quantitative, spatial or threshold based analysis of combined effects. This approach does not adequately reflect the operational reality experienced by fishing vessels. Fishing activity may be affected simultaneously by:

- displacement
- cable interaction risk
- loss of access
- increased congestion
- increased steaming distances
- ecological change

These effects do not occur in isolation and may combine to influence fishing behaviour, vessel operating patterns and the viability of fishing grounds. However, the assessment does not meaningfully evaluate their combined consequences for commercial fisheries.

The assessment acknowledges a number of fisheries pressures, including reduced access to fishing grounds, displacement, increased fishing pressure on adjacent grounds, increased steaming requirements and snagging risk. However, these effects are ultimately concluded to remain minor adverse and not significant, including where the assessment recognises a receptor-led effect arising from reduced access to fishing grounds and the resulting displacement of fishing effort. Consequently, SFF does not consider the inter-related effects assessment to provide a robust assessment of combined impacts on commercial fisheries.

[18] Thistle Wind Partners (2026) Bowdun Offshore Wind Farm, Offshore EIA Report, Volume 2, Chapter 23: Inter-Related Effects (Document Ref. TWP-BOW-RPS-OSC-RPT-00047, April 2026)

SFF considers the cumulative assessment to represent one of the most significant weaknesses within the EIAR. The region is already subject to increasing pressures from offshore wind development, transmission infrastructure, changing fisheries regulations and displacement arising from other developments. Yet cumulative effects are repeatedly characterised as minor.

The assessment relies heavily upon screening processes that exclude projects based upon temporal, spatial and data availability criteria. This approach is likely to underestimate cumulative pressures experienced by fisheries. SFF does not consider that the assessment adequately evaluates:

- regional displacement
- cumulative loss of fishing grounds
- interaction between multiple developments
- increasing seabed congestion
- long-term spatial squeeze.

Furthermore, the assessment does not provide a detailed evaluation of the regional consequences of cumulative pressures for fishing activity, fishing patterns or the availability of alternative grounds. Whilst Chapter 23 includes an ecosystem based assessment, this assessment remains predominantly qualitative in nature and relies heavily on literature review, professional judgement and conclusions drawn from other technical chapters. SFF does not consider that this provides a sufficiently robust basis for concluding that cumulative fisheries impacts will remain minor.

The EIAR places considerable reliance upon:

- Fisheries Mitigation Monitoring and Communication Plans
- liaison arrangements
- compensation mechanisms
- monitoring
- future plan development.

These measures are predominantly procedural. They do not reduce project footprint, eliminate displacement, guarantee cable burial, remove snagging risk or secure continued fishing access. Compensation mechanisms and disruption agreements may address economic consequences but do not constitute mitigation under the EIA Regulations. Similarly, monitoring should not be treated as mitigation. SFF therefore considers that the assessment relies heavily upon the assumed implementation and effectiveness of measures that are either not yet fully defined or remain untested in the context of the Proposed Development. Chapter 23 explicitly assumes the successful implementation of embedded and additional mitigation measures when reaching conclusions on significance. SFF considers that the effectiveness of such measures should be demonstrated rather than assumed, particularly where they form a key part of the justification for concluding that impacts are not significant.

A recurring feature throughout the EIAR is the retention of significant uncertainty at application stage. Key areas of uncertainty include:

- cable burial performance
- cable protection requirements
- long-term cable exposure risk
- future maintenance requirements
- precise interaction with fisheries.

In many cases these matters are deferred to post-consent plans, assessments and monitoring programmes. SFF does not consider that significant uncertainty of this nature can be reconciled with confident conclusions regarding impact significance. In several instances, conclusions regarding significance depend upon future assessments, monitoring programmes, management plans and the successful implementation of mitigation measures that will only be developed, refined or confirmed post-consent. This creates uncertainty as to whether the predicted effects on commercial fisheries have been fully assessed at the point of determination.

SFF does not consider that the cumulative effect of these uncertainties is adequately reflected in the significance conclusions reached elsewhere within the EIAR.

Fisheries Management, Mitigation and Communication Plan (FMMCP)[19]

The EIAR places considerable reliance upon the future implementation of the FMMCP as a principal mechanism for managing interactions between the Proposed Development and commercial fisheries. The FMMCP contains a number of commitments relating to fisheries liaison, communication, cable management procedures, monitoring arrangements and disruption agreements. However, many of these measures are procedural in nature and are focused on the management of interactions once impacts occur, rather than the avoidance or reduction of impacts through project design.

SFF recognises that the FMMCP may provide a useful framework for communication, liaison, notification procedures and stakeholder engagement throughout the lifetime of the Proposed Development. However, an FMMCP is ultimately a management document and does not, in itself, remove the underlying effects associated with displacement, loss of access to fishing grounds, cable interaction risk, operational disruption or cumulative competition for marine space.

SFF notes that a number of important fisheries related matters remain dependent upon post-consent plans, assessments and future decision making, including the Cable Burial Risk Assessment, Cable Plan, monitoring arrangements and implementation of elements of the fisheries mitigation framework. Consequently, aspects of the fisheries mitigation strategy remain uncertain at the point of determination.

SFF further notes that the FMMCP adopts a limited approach to Disruption Agreements, anticipating their application principally within the Export Cable Corridor and primarily in relation to fisheries demonstrating the clearest spatial interaction with construction activities. The FMMCP also concludes that project specific fisheries monitoring is not required because project alone effects are assessed as non-significant, with reliance instead placed upon potential future participation in regional monitoring initiatives. However, the nature, scope, governance and delivery mechanisms for such initiatives are not clearly defined, and the FMMCP does not identify any mechanism that would secure or demonstrate the Applicant's participation in cumulative fisheries monitoring. SFF therefore remains concerned that reliance on potential future regional monitoring initiatives provides limited certainty regarding how cumulative fisheries effects will be monitored, understood or addressed over the lifetime of the Proposed Development. SFF does not consider that these approaches adequately address concerns relating to mobile gear fisheries, displacement, cumulative effects and future changes in fishing activity over the operational lifetime of the Proposed Development.

Annex A of the FMMCP confirms that SFF raised concerns regarding continued reliance on FLOWW guidance, the scope of Disruption Agreements, compensation provisions for mobile gear fisheries, the absence of project specific monitoring commitments and the treatment of cumulative effects. Whilst some amendments were incorporated into the final document, these substantive concerns remained unresolved.

Accordingly, SFF considers that the FMMCP should be regarded as a supporting management tool rather than primary mitigation. The effectiveness of fisheries mitigation should be demonstrated through project design, avoidance measures, reduction of fisheries interaction pathways and clearly defined commitments capable of reducing impacts experienced by commercial fisheries. SFF does not consider that reliance on the future implementation of the FMMCP provides a sufficient basis for reducing the significance of identified fisheries impacts or for concluding that residual effects on commercial fisheries will be minor and not significant.

Habitats Regulations Assessment and Compensation[20]

[19] Thistle Wind Partners (2026). Bowdun Offshore Wind Farm Offshore EIA Report, Volume 4, Appendix 28: Fisheries Mitigation, Monitoring and Communication Plan (Document Ref. TWP-BOW-RPS-ENV-RPT-00026, April 2026)

[20] Thistle Wind Partners (2026) Bowdun Offshore Wind Farm Habitats Regulations Appraisal: Applicant's Case for Derogation (Document Ref. TWP-BOW-PIN-CON-RPT-00001, April 2026) ; and Thistle Wind Partners (2026). Bowdun

SFF notes that the Applicant's Habitats Regulations Appraisal Derogation Case and Compensation Roadmap identify compensatory measures intended to maintain the coherence of the National Site Network, including predator control and biosecurity measures for seabirds as well as bycatch reduction initiatives within commercial fisheries.

The Compensation Roadmap also references wider strategic compensation measures under development by Scottish Government, including fisheries management measures, fisheries closures and related initiatives. SFF records that such measures are proposed solely within the context of Habitats Regulations compensation and are intended to address ecological impacts on designated sites and qualifying features.

SFF emphasises that compensatory measures under the Habitats Regulations serve a fundamentally different purpose from the avoidance, reduction or mitigation of impacts on commercial fisheries. Such measures do not address displacement of fishing activity, loss of access to fishing grounds, cable interaction risks, cumulative spatial squeeze, increased operating costs, snagging risk or operational safety concerns arising from the Proposed Development.

Accordingly, HRA compensation cannot be relied upon to remedy deficiencies within the Commercial Fisheries assessment, nor can the future development of compensatory measures be used to support conclusions that impacts on commercial fisheries will be minor and not significant. Any references to fisheries management, fisheries closures, bycatch reduction or related measures within the context of HRA compensation should not be construed as mitigation for commercial fisheries impacts arising from the Proposed Development. Furthermore, any fisheries related compensatory measures should not be assumed to be without consequences for commercial fishing activity and cannot be relied upon to offset impacts assessed within the Commercial Fisheries chapter.

Decommissioning and Financial Security

SFF highlights the need for robust, secured and inflation linked financial provisions to ensure the full and effective decommissioning of offshore wind infrastructure. Given the scale of the project there remains uncertainty regarding the long-term costs and technical requirements associated with removal of offshore infrastructure including foundations, scour protection and subsea cables.

Recent offshore wind experience elsewhere in the UK has demonstrated that decommissioning liabilities can be underestimated, particularly for early-generation projects where assumptions regarding future costs, technologies and removal requirements remain uncertain.

Incomplete or partial removal of infrastructure has the potential to result in long-term seabed obstruction, continued snagging risk and ongoing constraints on fishing activity. SFF also notes that the retention of infrastructure elements in situ, including foundations, scour and cable protection and subsea cables, has the potential to create long-term obstructions and associated safety risks for fishing vessels where full removal is not secured at decommissioning.

While detailed decommissioning programmes are secured post-consent under the Energy Act 2004, insufficient clarity is provided at the EIA stage regarding the extent of infrastructure removal and the long-term restoration of seabed functionality. SFF considers that the EIA stage provides an appropriate opportunity to identify and address these risks, particularly given the long operational lifespan of the Proposed Development and the uncertainty associated with future decommissioning outcomes.

Given Marine Directorate existing powers to require financial guarantees under both the Marine (Scotland) Act 2010 and the Energy Act 2004, SFF suggests that clear, enforceable and adequately secured financial provisions should be in place at consent stage to ensure that decommissioning obligations are deliverable,

Offshore Wind Farm, Derogation Case: Compensation Roadmap (Document Ref. TWP-BOW-RPS-ENV-RPT-00042, April 2026)

realistic and inflation adjusted, and that liabilities are not transferred to other marine users, including the fishing industry. In particular, the project documentation indicates that the final extent of infrastructure removal will be determined through future decommissioning planning. As a result, there remains uncertainty at the point of determination regarding the treatment of foundations, subsea cables, cable protection and other seabed infrastructure, and the extent to which seabed functionality will ultimately be restored following decommissioning.

Conclusion

SFF considers that the EIAR demonstrates a consistent pattern of:

- underestimation of fisheries impacts
- reliance upon assumptions regarding adaptation and recoverability
- significant design uncertainty
- over-reliance on procedural mitigation
- inadequate assessment of displacement
- underestimation of cumulative effects and
- material inconsistencies between technical chapters.

In particular, the assessment repeatedly acknowledges displacement, cable interaction risks, seabed uncertainty and increasing spatial conflict, whilst simultaneously concluding that impacts on commercial fisheries are predominantly minor adverse and not significant. SFF does not consider that these conclusions are adequately supported by the evidence presented.

Accordingly, SFF does not consider that the EIAR provides a sufficiently robust evidential basis to demonstrate that impacts on commercial fisheries have been adequately assessed, avoided, minimised or mitigated. In particular, the assessment does not demonstrate that displaced fishing activity can be accommodated elsewhere without significant consequences, that long-term interaction with cable infrastructure can occur safely and effectively, or that cumulative fisheries pressures arising from multiple offshore developments have been adequately evaluated.

SFF considers that further assessment, reduced uncertainty and strengthened outcome based mitigation are required before the significance and acceptability of impacts on commercial fisheries can be robustly evaluated.

In the absence of clearly defined, secured and demonstrably effective mitigation measures, and while substantial uncertainty remains regarding displacement, cable burial performance, cable protection requirements, cumulative effects and long-term fisheries access, the conclusion that there will be no significant residual effects on commercial fisheries cannot be substantiated.

SFF therefore considers that additional assessment, greater certainty regarding project design and fisheries interaction, and stronger outcome based mitigation measures are required before the Proposed Development can be concluded to be compatible with the continued sustainable operation of commercial fisheries within the affected area.

For and on behalf of the Scottish Fishermen's Federation

[Redacted]

Oliwia Biros
Offshore Consents Assessments Manager
Scottish Fishermen's Federation

Scottish Water

Monday, 11 May 2026

Marine Licensing
375 Victoria Road

Aberdeen

Development Operations
The Bridge
Buchanan Gate Business Park
Cumbernauld Road
Stepps
Glasgow
G33 6FB

Development Operations
Freephone Number - 0800 3890379
E-Mail - DevelopmentOperations@scottishwater.co.uk
www.scottishwater.co.uk
Follow Us

Dear Customer,

Bowdun Offshore Wind Farm, 38K East of Aberdeenshire coast, Aberdeenshire, DD10 0HT
Planning Ref: MD-00012075 & MD-00012076
Our Ref: DSCAS-0154956-TYN
Proposal: application for section 36 consent and marine licence applications, Environmental Impact Assessment Report

Please quote our reference in all future correspondence

Audit of Proposal

Scottish Water has no objection to this proposal. Please read the following carefully as there may be further action required. Scottish Water would advise the following:

Drinking Water Protected Areas

A review of our records indicates that there are no Scottish Water drinking water catchments or water abstraction sources, which are designated as Drinking Water Protected Areas under the Water Framework Directive, in the area that may be affected by the proposed activity.

Surface Water

For reasons of sustainability and to protect our customers from potential future sewer flooding, Scottish Water will not accept any surface water connections into our combined sewer system.

There may be limited exceptional circumstances where we would allow such a connection for brownfield sites only, however this will require significant justification from the customer taking account of various factors including legal, physical, and technical challenges.

In order to avoid costs and delays where a surface water discharge to our combined sewer system is anticipated, the developer should refer to our guides which can be found at https://www.scottishwater.co.uk/Help-and-Resources/Document-Hub/Business-and-Developers/Connecting-to-Our-Network which detail our policy and processes to support the application process, evidence to support the intended drainage plan should be submitted at the technical application stage where we will assess this evidence in a robust manner and provide a decision that reflects the best option from environmental and customer perspectives.

Next Steps:

All developments that propose a connection to the public water or waste water infrastructure are required to submit a Pre-Development Enquiry (PDE) Form via our Customer Portal prior to any formal technical application being submitted, allowing us to fully appraise the proposals

I trust the above is acceptable however if you require any further information regarding this matter please contact me on **0800 389 0379** or via the e-mail address below or at planningconsultations@scottishwater.co.uk.

Yours sincerely,

[Redacted]
Development Services Analyst
PlanningConsultations@scottishwater.co.uk

Scottish Water Disclaimer:

"It is important to note that the information on any such plan provided on Scottish Water's infrastructure, is for indicative purposes only and its accuracy cannot be relied upon. When the exact location and the nature of the infrastructure on the plan is a material requirement then you should undertake an appropriate site investigation to confirm its actual position in the ground and to determine if it is suitable for its intended purpose. By using the plan you agree that Scottish Water will not be liable for any loss, damage or costs caused by relying upon it or from carrying out any such site investigation."

Supplementary Guidance

- Scottish Water asset plans can be obtained from our appointed asset plan providers:
    - Site Investigation Services (UK) Ltd
    - Tel: 0333 123 1223
    - Email: sw@sisplan.co.uk
    - www.sisplan.co.uk
- Scottish Water's current minimum level of service for water pressure is 1.0 bar or 10m head at the customer's boundary internal outlet. Any property which cannot be adequately serviced from the available pressure may require private

pumping arrangements to be installed, subject to compliance with Water Byelaws. If the developer wishes to enquire about Scottish Water's procedure for checking the water pressure in the area, then they should write to the Development Operations department at the above address.

- If a connection to the public sewer and/or water main requires to be laid through land out-with public ownership, the developer must provide evidence of formal approval from the affected landowner(s) by way of a deed of servitude.

- Scottish Water may only vest new water or waste water infrastructure which is to be laid through land out with public ownership where a Deed of Servitude has been obtained in our favour by the developer.

- The developer should also be aware that Scottish Water requires land title to the area of land where a pumping station and/or a Sustainable Drainage System (SUDS) proposed to vest in Scottish Water is constructed.

- Please find information on how to submit application to Scottish Water at our Customer Portal.