

THE WILDLIFE AND COUNTRYSIDE ACT 1981**LICENCE TO DISTURB BASKING SHARKS (*Cetorhinus maximus*)****Licence Number: EPS/BS-00011394**

This licence is granted under Part I, section 16(3)(i) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 by the Scottish Ministers who, after consultation with and having been advised as to the circumstances in which they should grant such licences by NatureScot, are satisfied that the activities authorised by this licence and that there is no other satisfactory solution; and unless revoked by the Scottish Ministers is valid from 19 October 2025 to 03 November 2025 and authorises:

[Redacted]

Offshore Solutions Group Limited
4th Floor
205 Regent Street
W1B 4HB

Or any person authorised in writing by him / her to disturb (intentionally or recklessly) basking sharks (*Cetorhinus maximus*), located at the Moray FLOW-Park, but only subject to the under-noted conditions.

PURPOSE AND CIRCUMSTANCES IN WHICH ACTION IS REQUIRED

This licence is granted for the purpose of permitting the disturbance of basking sharks (*Cetorhinus maximus*) at the Moray FLOW-Park, for social, economic or environmental purpose in connection with the geophysical survey campaign to inform physical characteristics of the seabed in both the North and South Moray Firth FLOW Park areas at the following location(s):

Moray Firth-North FLOW-Park
57° 39.529' N 03° 49.215' W
57° 38.634' N 03° 53.783' W
57° 37.816' N 03° 57.847' W
57° 37.394' N 03° 58.493' W
57° 36.983' N 03° 58.579' W
57° 36.174' N 03° 58.032' W
57° 35.433' N 03° 57.398' W
57° 35.332' N 03° 56.570' W
57° 36.214' N 03° 52.442' W
57° 36.898' N 03° 49.275' W
57° 37.113' N 03° 48.851' W
57° 37.338' N 03° 48.096' W
57° 37.458' N 03° 47.425' W
57° 37.663' N 03° 46.461' W
57° 38.001' N 03° 46.512' W
57° 38.663' N 03° 47.081' W
57° 39.289' N 03° 47.716' W
57° 39.520' N 03° 48.408' W

Moray Firth-South FLOW-Park

57° 41.558' N 03° 43.701' W
57° 41.165' N 03° 44.198' W
57° 40.744' N 03° 44.226' W
57° 40.106' N 03° 43.665' W
57° 39.553' N 03° 43.106' W
57° 39.407' N 03° 42.822' W
57° 39.523' N 03° 42.226' W
57° 39.588' N 03° 41.549' W
57° 39.652' N 03° 41.176' W
57° 40.782' N 03° 36.512' W
57° 41.985' N 03° 31.592' W
57° 42.499' N 03° 31.605' W
57° 43.097' N 03° 32.157' W
57° 43.622' N 03° 32.721' W
57° 43.853' N 03° 33.400' W
57° 43.867' N 03° 34.169' W
57° 42.789' N 03° 38.731' W

This licence is granted for permitting disturbance of the above named species as a result of the following activities:

Geophysical surveys including Multibeam Echosounder ("MBES") bathymetry, Sidescan Sonar ("SSS"), Ultra-short Baseline ("USBL"), Sub-bottom Profiler ("SBP") and Ultra-high Resolution Seismic (UHRS").

During the period this licence is valid section 9(4A) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 does not apply to the undertaking of the aforementioned licensed activities by either the Licensee or any person authorised in writing by him / her, which involves or results in the intentional or reckless disturbance of basking sharks (*Cetorhinus maximus*), at the North and South Moray Firth FLOW Park areas, provided that such activities are done under and in accordance with the terms of this licence.

LICENCE CONDITIONS

1. The Licensee must ensure that all licensed activities are carried out in strict accordance with the mitigation and working methods proposed in the application for this licence, together with supporting information and all licensed activities must be carried out within the timescale(s) given within the application and any subsequent written correspondence between Marine Directorate – Licensing Operations Team ("MD-LOT") and the applicant, but subject to the following modifications or amendments made within this licence.
2. The Licensee must ensure that all licensed activities are carried out in strict accordance with the Moray FLOW-Park, European Protected Species (EPS) Risk Assessment: Geophysical Survey Campaign 2025, Rev.01, subject to the following amendments.
3. In the event of the Licensee becoming aware that any of the information on which the issue of this licence was based has changed, the Licensing Authority must be notified as soon as reasonably practicable.
4. The Licensee must ensure that the Joint Nature Conservation Committee ("JNCC") 2017 Guidelines for minimizing the risk of injury and disturbance to marine mammals from seismic surveys is followed at all times in connection with the undertaking of such surveys as far as it is practical to do so. These are available from the JNCC website <https://hub.jncc.gov.uk/assets/e2a46de5-43d4-43f0-b296-c62134397ce4>.

5. The Licensee must ensure that, if any aspects of the proposed activities differ from the detail submitted in the Noise Registry - Initial Registration Form, a new Initial Registration Form must be completed and submitted to the Scottish Ministers and the JNCC no later than one week prior to commencement of the licensed activities.
6. The Licensee must ensure that where survey equipment has the capability to undergo a soft start procedure, this is implemented on every occasion survey equipment is switched on.
7. Except where it is not relevant to the provisions of this licence, the Licensee must ensure that the Scottish Marine Wildlife Watching Code is adhered to at all times.
8. The Licensee must apply the EPS Mitigation Strategy, as set out in the Moray FLOW-Park, European Protected Species (EPS) Risk Assessment: Geophysical Survey Campaign 2025 REV 01, to the use of MBES, SSS, SBP and UHRS.
9. The Licensee must ensure that where possible, the Licensed Activity is carried out during daylight hours.
10. Should the Licensed Activity take place outwith daylight hours, the Licensee must ensure that artificial lighting and vision/infrared binoculars are used during the Marine Mammal Observer ("MMO") pre-watch.
11. Should the Licensed Activity take place outwith daylight hours, the Licensee must ensure that once the MMO pre watch has been conducted, equipment only capable of causing disturbance (operating below 200kHz and 210dB at peak) is operated for a period of 15 minutes. Once this period has elapsed, JNCC 2017 Guidelines for minimizing the risk of injury and disturbance to marine mammals from seismic surveys must be adhered to and if injury risk equipment (any equipment operating below 200kHz and above 210dB peak) is utilised, it must be capable of performing a soft start.
12. The Licensee must ensure that copies of the licence are available for inspection by any person authorised by the Scottish Ministers at the office of the Licensee and at all sites where licensed activities are taking place.
13. Any person authorised by the Scottish Ministers must be permitted to inspect the operations relating to the licence at any reasonable time. The Licensee must allow appropriate assistance to facilitate inspection.
14. The Licensee must, no later than one month after the expiry date of this licence, submit to MD-LOT, a written report detailing all actions taken in accordance with the specified terms and conditions of the licence. This report must detail the procedures, visual observations and include the original Marine Mammal Recording Form(s). Any difficulties encountered, or recommendations should also be noted.
15. The Licensee must, no later than 12 weeks after completion of the noisy activity, complete a 'close-out' noise registry form. This is available from the JNCC website <https://mnr.jncc.gov.uk/>.

Authorised on behalf of Scottish Ministers
By a member of staff of the Scottish Government

Signed:

[Redacted]

Marine Directorate - Licensing Operations Team
375 Victoria Road
Aberdeen
AB11 9DB