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THE WILDLIFE AND COUNTRYSIDE ACT 1981

Application for a Basking shark (*Cetorhinus maximus*) licence for one of the following purposes

- Preserving public health or public safety
- Preventing the spread of disease
- Preventing serious damage to livestock, foodstuffs for livestock, crops, vegetables, fruit, growing timber or any other form of property, or to fisheries.
- Social, economic or environmental purpose

Important: Before completing this form, please read these notes carefully

Please complete all relevant sections of the form.

Please ensure that you answer questions fully in order to avoid delays.

The completed application should be sent to Marine Directorate Licensing Operations Team (MD-LOT) at the address below or emailed to MD.MarineLicensing@gov.scot.

We will not process unsigned application forms.

Please ensure that you supply any necessary supporting information e.g. detailed method statements, risk assessments etc.

MD-LOT will aim to determine whether a licence should be issued within 6 to 8 weeks of acceptance of a completed application.

If you experience any problems filling in this form, please contact MD-LOT.

Please use this application form if you wish to undertake works/activities that would affect Basking sharks in the inshore marine area (0 – 12 nautical miles).

Do not use this form if your application relates to scientific, research, conservation or educational purposes. Please contact NatureScot, email licensing@nature.scot, Telephone 01463 725364 or visit the [NatureScot website](#) for a licence application for these purposes.

Before a licence can be granted, it is essential that other relevant licences or consents have been secured for the proposed activity (eg Marine licence).

It is the responsibility of the applicant to obtain any other consents or authorisations that may be required.

Part A

Section 1 Personal details

Please provide details of the individual, company or partnership you wish to be named on the licence. The licensee is responsible for ensuring compliance with the licence and its conditions. Failure to carry out the work proposed in accordance with the terms of the licence may expose the licensee to criminal liability.

Section 2 Previous applications

Please provide details of any previous relevant licences.

Part B

Section 3

Location

Describe the location of the proposed works. Include a list of the latitude and longitude co-ordinates (WGS84) of the boundary points of the proposed project. WGS84 is the World Geodetic System 1984 and the reference co-ordinate system used for marine licence applications. Co-ordinates taken from GPS equipment should be set to WGS84. Coordinates taken from recent admiralty charts will be on a WGS84 compatible datum. Ordnance survey maps do not use WGS84. In a few cases, (e.g. laying of long pipelines) it may only be practicable to supply co-ordinates for the start and end points.

Example: For positions read from charts the format should be as in the example: 55°55.555'N 002°22.222'W (WGS84). The decimal point specifies that decimals of minutes are used and the datum is stated explicitly. If seconds are used then the format should be as in the example: 55°55'44"N 2°22'11"W (WGS84).

It is important that the correct positions, in the correct format, are included with this application, as any errors will result in the application being refused or delayed.

Section 4 Consideration of designated sites

Please provide details of any designated sites affected by your proposals. You are advised to consult Scottish Natural Heritage, or other appropriate regulator, if the work you propose to do affects a European site, an MPA or a Site of Special Scientific Interest.

Section 5 Activities to be licensed

Please indicate the activities you intend to undertake that would otherwise be unlawful. Provide details of the proposed commencement and completion dates of the activities. The licence start date will not be backdated, since to commence a project for which a licence has not been obtained may constitute an offence resulting in appropriate legal action.

It is the licensee's responsibility to apply for any further licences or an extension prior to the expiry of the initial licence.

Section 6 Purpose of the licence application

Please indicate the purpose of the licence application as described in the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, Part 1, Section 16 (3).

Section 7 Satisfactory alternatives

Please provide your consideration of why there is no satisfactory alternative. This must include the other options that have been evaluated, the alternative sites that were considered by you and why they were rejected (if no other sites were considered, you must provide the reasons why), or alternative methods of carrying out the work and alternative dates / timings. The 'do nothing' alternative must also be considered.

In relation to each alternative considered, please provide an explanation of why you consider it to be satisfactory or unsatisfactory. In respect of any alternative sites please provide the location(s) and details of the alternative site(s), or your views on how the activity/proposal might have been achieved differently, and any other helpful information; e.g., pros and cons of alternative sites, or whether there is likely to be demand for all suitable sites to be used to meet an identified need. Please explain how this conclusion was reached.

Section 8 Summary of the planning / licensing position

Detail all consents and licences required for the proposed project and indicate those that you have applied for or received.

Section 9 Noise Monitoring

Under the Marine Strategy Regulations (2010), there is now a requirement to monitor loud, low to mid frequency (10Hz to 10kHz) impulsive noise. This includes use of seismic airguns, other geophysical surveys (<10kHz), pile driving, explosives and certain acoustic deterrent devices. This monitoring requires completion of a form at the application stage (giving details of the proposed work) as well as completion of a 'close-out' form (giving details of the actual dates and locations where the activities occurred). The close-out form should be returned within 12 weeks of completing the 'noisy' activity or, in the case of prolonged activities such as piling for harbour construction or wind farms, at quarterly intervals or after each phase of foundation installation. These forms are available on the [Marine Noise Registry website](#).

Section 10 Scotland's National Marine Plan

Scotland's National Marine Plan has been prepared in accordance with the EU Directive 2014/89/EU, which came into force in July 2014. The Directive introduces a framework for maritime spatial planning and aims to promote the sustainable development of marine areas and the sustainable use of marine resources. It also sets out a number of minimum requirements all of which have been addressed in this plan. In doing so, and in accordance with article 5(3) of the Directive, the Marine Directorate has considered a wide range of sectoral uses and activities and have determined how these different objectives are reflected and weighted in the marine plan. Land-sea interactions have also been taken into account as part of the marine planning process. Any applicant for a marine licence should consider their proposals with reference to Scotland's National Marine Plan. A copy of Scotland's National Marine Plan can be found on the [Scottish Government website](#).

Indicate whether you have considered the project with reference to Scotland's National Marine Plan and provide details of considerations made with reference to the policies, including but not limited to General Policy13 (GEN 13), that have been considered. If you have not considered the project with reference to Scotland's National Marine Plan please provide an explanation.

Section 11 Privacy notice

This section briefly describes the Scottish Ministers' responsibilities in relation to Data Protection based on the requirements the data protection laws and the Environmental Information (Scotland) Regulations 2004 and the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002.

Part D

Section 12 Declaration and warning

It is important to read the Declaration and Warning sections before signing the application form.

Site visits and compliance checks

It is possible that the licensing authority may undertake a site visit prior to the issue of a licence. The majority of site visits will be arranged several days in advance and will be conducted in the presence of the licensee (or applicant) however there may be occasions when a site visit will be made at short notice.

Licensees should be aware that they may receive a request for a site visit by the licensing authority, or a person authorised by the licensing authority, to assess site conditions against the conditions of the licence. It is essential that if any of the agreed mitigation measures contained in the method statement are changed for any reason, the licensing authority is informed as soon as possible.

The Licensing authority will monitor compliance with licences issued based on the information included in licence returns.

Where to seek further information

Further information can be obtained from Licensing Operations Team at the address below.

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

Tel: 0300 244 5046
Email: MD.MarineLicensing@gov.scot

While every effort has been made to ensure the information contained in this document is accurate, nothing in this document should be taken to replace the current legislation in force at this time. You are advised to obtain qualified legal advice in relation to your rights and responsibilities under the 1981 Act and other legislation.

Part A. The Applicant: Personal details

These questions relate to the person who will be the named licensee. The licence can be issued to an individual or a company or a partnership and the licensee will be responsible for ensuring compliance with the licence and the conditions of the licence. Under the The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 failure to carry out the work which you propose in accordance with the terms of the licence may expose you to criminal liability.

1. Name of applicant

Title: [Redacted] Forename(s): [Redacted] Surname: [Redacted]

Company Name: **Mutual Energy**

Business Title (if Appropriate): **Gas Transmission Engineer (Assets)**

Address: **Mutual Energy
The Arena Building
85 Ormeau Road
Belfast
BT7 1SH**

Tel no. (incl dialling code): [Redacted]

Email address: [Redacted]

2. The Applicant: Previous applications:

Have you previously held a wildlife licence issued in the UK? (please tick as appropriate)

Yes No (If yes, please complete below, if no, please go to Part B)

Who issued the licence? **Marine Scotland**

Licence number (most recent licence) **EPS/BS-00010074**

Year in which the licence was issued. **2022**

What species were covered by the licence? **Basking Shark**

What activity was covered by the licence e.g. disturb, injure? **Disturb**

Part B. The Application

3 Species

(a) How many individuals will be affected by licensed work? This must be the maximum number of animals that could be affected prior to any mitigation measures being applied.

Basking shark are commonly seen in surface waters in summer months around the UK, particularly along western coasts. Density estimates are low at <10 sightings per 10 km² (DECC 2022). Conservatively, it is predicted that between 7 and 75 basking shark could be present within the proposed survey area.

(b) Please provide a description of how this number was calculated / estimated

To calculate the number of individual animals within the vicinity of the cables and pipelines to be surveyed, a 3km buffer has been applied around all assets in accordance with the precautionary Effective Deterrent Range (EDR) calculated by the JNCC (JNCC, 2025) for High Resolution Geophysical Surveys. A total site area of 327km² can therefore be assumed as the baseline area for calculation of species in Scottish waters.

(c) **Location of proposed licensed action**

Latitude and Longitude co-ordinates (WGS84) defining the extent of the project. Please continue on a separate sheet if necessary.

Latitude								Longitude							
		°			.		'N			°			.		'W
		°			.		'N			°			.		'W
		°			.		'N			°			.		'W
		°			.		'N			°			.		'W
		°			.		'N			°			.		'W
		°			.		'N			°			.		'W
		°			.		'N			°			.		'W
		°			.		'N			°			.		'W

The coordinates are attached as a separate file, these coordinates show the total extent of the impacts predicted from the project as they represent the survey line and a 3km buffer impact buffer. No impacts are predicted beyond this distance.

- (d) Provide a brief description of the proposed activity and the methods to be used.
Detailed information should be included in your supporting information
Please provide details of the source levels and frequencies of underwater noise if relevant

Please see the supporting Protected Sites and Species Assessment for full details of the activities, methods used and underwater noise details. In brief, the proposed activities relate to the offshore survey of the Scotland to Northern Ireland Pipeline (SNIP) and 4 x Moyle High Voltage Direct Current (HVDC) interconnector cables. The submarine assets are located in the North Channel, Irish Sea, within the territorial waters of Scotland and Northern Ireland. Surveys would be conducted between March and December 2026. The offshore scope is estimated to take 20 days (approximately 7 - 10 days in Northern Irish waters) with the nearshore scope taking eight days (approximately three days in Scottish waters), subject to weather and standby time should any of the equipment require repair. Offshore surveys will comprise of one transect along each asset (four transects in total). The survey will consist of Remotely Operated Vehicle (ROV) acquired survey data (multibeam, sub-bottom imager). The nearshore survey will also include vessel-acquired data (multibeam echosounder). None of the surveys will interact with the seabed and no sediment samples will be removed. Source levels and frequencies of noise-generating equipment are listed in full in the accompanying PSSA document.

- (e) Briefly state how you will minimise the impact of your proposed work on Basking shark.
Detailed information should be included in your supporting information.

The proposed surveys will be undertaken with relevant best practice guidelines in place. These are currently as follows:

- JNCC (2017) Guidelines for minimising the risk to injury to marine mammals from geophysical surveys;
- SNH (Undated) Scottish Marine Wildlife Watching Code.

Nearshore survey lines and the offshore survey lines will start at the shore end and progress offshore to minimise risk of flushing animals towards the beach.

If the MMO identifies basking shark ahead of the survey vessel, if possible, speed will be reduced to minimise the risk of collision with animals.

4. Consideration of designated sites

Designated Areas: National Nature Reserves (NNR), Sites of Specific Scientific Interest (SSSI), Special Protection Area (SPA), Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), Ramsar sites, Marine Protected Areas (MPA). Information on designated sites is available on [NatureScot's website](#).

- (a) Will any part of the proposed activity fall within /or adjacent to an area covered by a designated site eg SSSI, SAC, MPA?

Yes No

- (b) Please give the name of the designated site(s) and either the outcome of your consultations or the reason why you have not consulted. Please enclose any relevant correspondence.

The survey will intersect the Clyde Sea Sill NCMPA. The site was Screened (following the MCZ / NCMPA Assessment methodology) to determine if the proposed survey activities could affect (other than insignificantly) either the protected features of the NCMPA or the ecological or geomorphological processes on which the protected features are dependent. Screening concluded that effects will be insignificant and Stage 1 Assessment or Notification is not required, hence consultation with SNH has not been carried out. The Screening is provided in the attached Protected Sites and Species Assessment.

5. Activities to be Licenced

Proposed Methods

(a) Please complete all relevant columns in the table below to indicate the methods you propose to use, the activity involved and the time period in which you propose to use each method. This information will be used when preparing the licence to cover activities that would otherwise be unlawful, and failure to give full details may result in an inappropriate licence being issued.

Disturb	Kill	Take / trap	Damage or destroy place of shelter / protection	Method	From	To
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	SBP, MBES, Vessel noise, USBL	March 2026	December 2026
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			

6. Purposes of the licence application (tick one box only)

Please indicate which purpose relates to the proposed works. The options shown are taken from The Wildlife and Contryside Act 1981.

(a) Preserving public health or public safety (we will require evidence that there is a risk to public health or public safety e.g. an imminent risk of flooding) (Section 16 (3) (f))

Complete Annex A

(b) Preventing the spread of disease (Section 16 (3) (g))

Complete Annex B

(c) Preventing serious damage to livestock, foodstuffs for livestock, crops, vegetables, fruit, growing timber or any other form of property, or to fisheries.(Section 16 (3) (h))

Complete Annex C

(d) Social, economic or environmental purpose (Section 16 (3) (i))

Complete Annex D

7. Satisfactory alternatives

Please explain why there is no satisfactory alternative to carrying out the proposed work affecting the species. You must describe all possible alternatives which were considered and why they were considered unsuitable. You must also consider the option of not undertaking the work. It is not acceptable to state that 'there is no alternative'.

The primary objective of the surveys is to acquire high resolution data to assess the condition & integrity of UK Critical Infrastructure (the existing Moyle Interconnector cables & Scotland to Northern Ireland Gas Interconnector pipeline).

The equipment chosen is constrained by the specific purpose of the survey it is undertaking and the use of alternative equipment would not be effective, and therefore may not identify faults or features upon the assets. There are no suitable alternative options to the use of the geophysical equipment proposed for this survey.

8. Other licences / consents

Please detail below all licences / consents you have applied for or received. Before a licence can be granted, it is essential that other relevant licences or consents have been secured for the proposed activity (eg marine licence).

Type of licence / consent (e.g. marine licence, local planning authority, local works licence)	Date applied for	Reference no.	Date of issue of consent
EPS Licence	/2026	TBC	Submitted alongside this application.

9. Noise Monitoring

Please indicate if any of the following noise generating activities will be taking place during the operations:

Use of explosives Piling Use of acoustic deterrent devices
Survey equipment operating in the range 10 Hz – 10kHz

If you have ticked any of the above boxes please complete a proposed activity form on the [Marine Noise Registry website](#).

Please note the form must only be completed once for each activity. If you have already completed a form for this activity (eg through the marine licensing process) please give details.

A proposed activity form has been completed on the Marine Noise Registry website.

Licence applications will not be accepted until this form has been completed and submitted.

10. Scotland's National Marine Plan

Provide details of considerations made with reference to the relevant policies that have been considered.

The proposed survey supports the safe and efficient maintenance of UK energy infrastructure and is underpinned by the National Policy Statements for Energy Infrastructure, including EN-1, EN-2, EN-4 and EN-5.

11. Privacy notice

The Scottish Government's Marine Directorate Licensing Operations Team (MD-LOT) has a range of statutory responsibilities including determining applications for licences to disturb or injure marine European protected species (EPS) under the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994 and The Conservation of Offshore Marine Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 and Basking shark licences under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

MD-LOT will, where necessary, process personal information including: names, addresses, email addresses and telephone numbers to determine a licence application. Personal information will be stored securely in the Scottish Government's official corporate record.

A full privacy notice can be found on the [Scottish Government website](#). If you are unable to access this, or you have any queries or concerns about how your personal information will be handled, contact MD-LOT at: Marine Scotland - Licensing Operations Team, Marine Laboratory, 375 Victoria Road, Aberdeen, AB11 9DB. Email: MD.MarineLicensing@gov.scot

Have you remembered to enclose supporting information with your application, as described in the accompanying guidance? Please check

Completed application form	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Completed annex	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Map / chart	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Correct co-ordinates	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Supporting information / risk assessment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Part C. Declarations

12. I have read and understand the guidance provided in this application form. I declare that the particulars given are correct to the best of my knowledge and belief, and I apply for a licence in accordance with these particulars.

I authorise employees or representatives of the Scottish Ministers to enter the site which is subject to this application for the purpose of monitoring and inspecting the permitted works.

Warning

Under the THE WILDLIFE AND COUNTRYSIDE ACT 1981 (as amended) failure to carry out the work which you propose in accordance with the terms of the licence may expose you to criminal liability. The licensee is responsible for ensuring compliance with the licence.

The Scottish Ministers can modify or revoke a licence at any time, provided there are good reasons. Any licence that may be issued is likely to be revoked immediately if it is discovered that false information was provided and resulted in the issue of a licence.

Under the **THE WILDLIFE AND COUNTRYSIDE ACT 1981 (as amended)**, any person who in order to obtain a licence knowingly or recklessly makes a statement or representation, or furnishes a document or information which is false in a material particular, shall be guilty of an offence and may be liable to criminal prosecution. Any person found guilty of such offences is liable on summary conviction to imprisonment for a term not exceeding six months or to a fine not exceeding level 5 on the standard scale (currently £5,000), or to both imprisonment and a fine.

Note: Previous convictions for wildlife offences will be taken into account and in some cases may mean that the Scottish Ministers do not consider it appropriate to grant a licence.

[Redacted]
Signature of the Applicant

Date 23/01/2026

(The person named at part 1)

Name in block letters [Redacted]

Note – If signing on behalf of a company, please append your signature with “on behalf of company name”.

The completed application should be signed and sent to Marine Directorate Licensing Operations Team (MS-LOT) at the address below or emailed to MD.MarineLicensing@gov.scot

Please remember to include all supporting information.

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

Disclaimer

While every effort has been made to ensure the information contained in this document is accurate, nothing in this document should be taken to replace the current legislation in force at this time. You are advised to obtain qualified legal advice in relation to your rights and responsibilities under the 1981 Act and other legislation.

Annex A

Only to be completed if you selected for preserving public health or public safety in question 6 of the application form

Please complete all questions

Give details of the risk to public health or safety

How has the risk been identified? Please give details of any expert advice received.

How will the proposed activity address the identified risk?

Annex B

Only to be completed if you selected for preventing the spread of disease in question 6 of the application form

Please complete all questions

What disease(s) is / are at risk of being spread if the proposed activity does not go ahead? Please give details of any expert advice received.

How will the proposed activity prevent the spread of disease? Please give details of any expert advice received.

Annex C

Only to be completed if you selected for preventing serious damage to livestock, foodstuffs for livestock, crops, vegetables, fruit, growing timber or any other form of property, or to fisheries in question 6 of the application form.

Please complete all questions

What serious damage has occurred or will occur if the proposed activity does not go ahead? Please give details of any expert advice received.

How will the proposed activity prevent serious damage? Please give details of any expert advice received.

Annex D

Only to be completed if you selected for a social, economic or environmental purpose in question 6 of the application form

Please complete all questions

What benefits will be provided by the proposed activity? Give details and indicate if they are social, economic or environmental. Please indicate if the benefits are short or long term.

Social & Economic - The Moyle Interconnector links the electricity grids of Northern Ireland and Scotland. It consists of two separate High Voltage Direct Current (HVDC) cables, each rated to transfer 250 MW in either direction. The system has been operational since 2002 and has experienced several faults in this time, which is why periodic surveys of the assets must be completed to ensure proper maintenance of the system and avoid a loss in transmission. Similarly, the Scotland to Northern Ireland Pipeline (SNIP) commissioned in 1996 transits natural gas between land and must be appropriately checked for potential faults.

Environmental - The data obtained will also be used to analyse and compare trends against previous survey data.

What public interest will be served? Who will benefit from the proposed activity? Does the proposed activity address a need?

Social & Economic - The purpose of the survey is to gather data in pursuit of the maintenance of both energy assets so that both regions have access to their current energy supplies.

Why is it imperative the proposed activity goes ahead?

Poor maintenance of HVDC cables and gas pipelines could lead to environmental and safety hazards as well as economic losses.

Does the proposed activity support any local regional or national policies? Please give details. Are you fulfilling a statutory role?

The proposed survey supports the safe and efficient maintenance of UK energy infrastructure and is underpinned by the National Policy Statements for Energy Infrastructure, including EN-1, EN-2, EN-4 and EN-5