



Sporad na Mara Offshore Wind Farm

Offshore Project

Environmental Impact Assessment Report

Chapter 20: Other Sea Users and Recreation, Volume 2a

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20 OTHER SEA USERS AND RECREATION

20.1 INTRODUCTION

20.1.1.1 This chapter of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Report presents the results of the assessment of the likely significant effects of the proposed Spiorad na Mara Offshore Wind Farm (hereafter referred to as 'the Offshore Project') with respect to Other Sea Users and Recreation.

20.1.1.2 This chapter should be read in conjunction with the project description provided in **Chapter 3: Project Description, Volume 1a** and the relevant parts of the following chapters and appendices:

- **Chapter 6: Socio-economics, Volume 2a** (due to the similar nature of receptors and further assessment of economic impacts in relation to tourism);
- **Chapter 9: Physical and Coastal Processes, Volume 2a** (for impacts to coastal processes as a result of the Offshore Project which relate to surfing);
- **Chapter 11: Benthic and Intertidal Ecology, Volume 2a** (for impacts relevant to fish and shellfish species associated with aquaculture);
- **Chapter 12: Fish Ecology, Volume 2a** (for impacts relevant to fish and shellfish species associated with aquaculture, such as underwater noise impacts);
- **Chapter 15: Offshore Archaeology and Cultural Heritage, Volume 2a** (due to additional assessment of cultural setting and visual related impacts);
- **Chapter 16: Shipping and Navigation, Volume 2a** (due to vessel related impacts, such as impacts to passenger, ferry and recreational vessels);
- **Chapter 18: Seascape, Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Volume 2a** (due to additional assessment of visual related impacts);
- **Chapter 19: Offshore Airborne Noise, Volume 2a** (for noise impacts associated with the Offshore Project);
- **Chapter 21: Commercial Fisheries, Volume 2a** (due to the overlap of impacts and assessment between aquaculture, recreational anglers and commercial fisheries);
- **Appendix 6.1: Socio-economic Impact Assessment Baseline Volume 1d** (due to the similar nature of receptors and further baseline economic information).

20.1.1.3 This technical chapter describes the following:

- Legislation, planning policy and other documentation that has informed the assessment (Section 20.2);
- Outcome of consultation and engagement that has been undertaken to date, including how matters relating to Other Sea Users and Recreation have been addressed (Section 20.3: Scoping and consultation);
- Scope of the assessment for Other Sea Users and Recreation (Section 20.4: Scope of the assessment);

- The methods of assessment used for baseline data gathering and impact assessment (Section 20.5: Methodology for baseline data gathering and impact assessment);
- Overall baseline (Section 20.6: Baseline conditions);
- Embedded measures relevant to Other Sea Users and Recreation and the relevant maximum design scenario (Section 20.7: Basis for Environmental Impact Assessment);
- Assessment of Other Sea Users and Recreation likely significant effects and further mitigation (Section 20.8-20.10: Assessment of effects and mitigation)
- Assessment of Other Sea Users and Recreation cumulative effects (including intra- and inter-related effects) (Section 20.11: Assessment of combined effects);
- Assessment of Other Sea Users and Recreation Consideration of Onshore Transmission Works (Section 20.12);
- Assessment of Other Sea Users and Recreation Cumulative effects (Section 20.13 **Error! Reference source not found.**);
- Assessment of Transboundary effects (Section 20.14);
- A summary of residual effects for Other Sea Users and Recreation (Section 20.15: Summary of residual effects);
- Information sources and documentation referred to in this chapter (Section 20.17: References).

20.1.1.4 This chapter is supported by the following plates:

- **Plate 20-1:** Other Sea Users and Recreation Study Area;
- **Plate 20-2:** Aquaculture sites in relation to the Other Sea Users and Recreation Study Area (CES, 2025);
- **Plate 20-3:** Average monthly total density of passenger vessel routes 2019-2025 (EMODnet, 2025), key Scottish ferry routes (Scottish Government, 2025) and ports and harbours in relation to the Other Sea Users and Recreation Study Area;
- **Plate 20-4:** Annual average density of recreational vessels 2017-2023 (EMODnet, 2023) for Other Sea Users and Recreation; and
- **Plate 20-5:** General marine and coastal recreation activity (Marine Scotland, 2015) for Other Sea Users and Recreation.

20.1.2 RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHER CHAPTER OF THE EIAR

20.1.2.1 There are a number of impact pathways relevant to this assessment that are considered in other chapters of the EIAR. In particular:

- Impacts on commercial fishing are assessed in **Chapter 21, Volume 2a** and impacts to fish and shellfish species associated with aquaculture are assessed in **Chapter 12, Volume 2a**. The scope of this chapter includes the potential impacts to recreational sea angling and local aquaculture companies.

- Impacts on ports and harbours are assessed in **Chapter 16, Volume 2a**. The scope of this chapter includes potential knock-on effects to recreational users and tourists at ports and harbours due to potential disruption by the Project.
- Impacts on accommodation, businesses, culture and socio-economic impacts on the tourism sector are assessed in **Chapter 6, Volume 2a**. The scope of this chapter includes assessment of potential disruption, displacement, loss of access and amenity effects on other sea users.
- Impacts on community health and wellbeing are assessed in **Chapter 22, Volume 2a**.

20.2 SUMMARY OF POLICY AND LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

20.2.1.1 This section outlines the legislation, policy and guidance that is relevant to the assessment of likely significant effects on Other Sea Users and Recreation associated with the construction, operation and maintenance, and decommissioning of the Offshore Project. In addition, other national, regional, and local policies are considered within this assessment where they are judged to be relevant. Further information on policies relevant to the EIAR is provided in **Chapter 2, Policy and Legislative Context, Volume 1a**.

20.2.1.2 A summary of the legislative and policy relevant to Other Sea Users and Recreation is provided in **Table 20-1** below.

Table 20-1 Legislation and Policy in relation to Other Sea Users and Recreation

Legislation, Policy and Guidance	Relevance to Other Sea Users and Recreation
National Legislation	
The Islands (Scotland) Act (2018) (Scottish Parliament, 2018)	Introduces measures to support and help meet the unique needs of Scotland's islands, including requiring the Scottish Ministers to develop a National Island Plan, and for relevant authorities to complete island community impact assessments, Section 20.5 and 20.7.
The Electricity Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations (2017) (Scottish Parliament, 2017)	EIA regulations applicable to projects requiring Section 36 consent, Section 20.5 and 20.7.
The Energy Act (2004) (UK Parliament, 2004) and the Energy Act (Scotland) 2016 (Scottish Parliament, 2016)	UK and Scottish regulations for renewable energy development application and consent requirements, Section 20.5 and 20.7.
National Policy	
National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) (Scottish Government, 2023)	The national spatial strategy for Scotland, setting out Scotland's national planning policy, Section 20.5.1 and 20.6.

Legislation, Policy and Guidance	Relevance to Other Sea Users and Recreation
Scotland's National Marine Plan (Scottish Government, 2015)	Scotland's National Marine Plan covers the management and planning of inshore and offshore waters in Scotland across all marine sectors, Section 20.5.1 and 20.6.
Scottish Government Sectorial Marine Plan (SMP) for Offshore Wind Energy (Scottish Government, 2020)	The SMP aims to identify sustainable plan options for the future development of offshore wind energy in Scotland, which includes key actions for the North Region. An update to the SMP is also currently being consulted on as part of the Draft SMP (Scottish Government, 2025), Section 20.5.1 and 20.6.
The National Islands Plan (2020) (Scottish Government, 2019)	Sets out 13 Strategic Objectives to improve the quality of life for Scotland's island communities Section 20.6.
Scotland Outlook 2030 (Scottish Tourism Alliance, 2020)	The national tourism strategy for Scotland, Section 20.6, 20.8 and 20.9.
Local Policy	
Outer Hebrides Local Development Plan ¹ (Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, 2018)	Adopted planning policy for the Outer Hebrides/ <i>Na h-Eileanan Siar</i> , setting out the vision and spatial strategy for the development of the area over the next 10 - 20 years, Section 20.6, 20.8 and 20.9.
Comhairle nan Eilean Siar Corporate Strategy 2024 - 2027 (Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, 2024)	Strategy document setting out the strategic direction, ambition, aspirations and commitments of Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, Section 20.6, 20.8 and 20.9.
Highlands and Islands Enterprise Strategy 2023 - 2028 (HIE, 2023)	Strategy document setting out the long-term vision and ambitions for the Highlands and Islands, Section 20.6, 20.8 and 20.9.
Islands Growth Deal (2023)	10 year package of investment funded by the UK and Scottish Governments, aiming to drive growth and create sustainable jobs across Shetland/ <i>Sealtainn</i> , Orkney/ <i>Arcaibh</i> and the Outer Hebrides/ <i>Na h-Eileanan Siar</i> , Section 20.6, 20.8 and 20.9.
Technical Guidance	

¹ CnES are currently developing the next local development plan (OHLDP-3) which is in the early 'call for ideas' stage: <https://www.cne-siar.gov.uk/planning-and-building-standards/planning/planning-policy-and-guidance/working-towards-new-development-plan>

Legislation, Policy and Guidance	Relevance to Other Sea Users and Recreation
Marine Scotland, Defining 'Local Area' for Assessing Impact of Offshore Renewables and Other Marine Developments: guidance principles (Scottish Government, 2022b)	Sets out an approach to defining the local impact area on land for developments such as offshore wind farms at sea, Section 20.5.
Scottish Human Rights Commission, Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in the Highlands and Islands (SHRC, 2024)	Report highlighting areas of human rights concern in rural areas of Scotland, including housing, access to food, healthcare, fuel poverty, access to technology, attainment gaps in education, and transport connectivity, Section 20.8 and 20.9.
Vattenfall, Guidance on Assessing the Socio-Economic Impacts of Offshore Wind Farms (Glasson et al., 2020)	Provides guidance for assessing economic (employment, Gross Value Added (GVA) and sector impacts) and social (demographics, housing and local services, socio-cultural/quality of life) impacts of offshore wind developments, Section 20.8 and 20.9.
The RYA's Position on Offshore Renewable Energy Developments: Paper 1 (of 4) – Wind Energy, June 2019 (RYA, 2019a)	Provides guidance on offshore renewable energy developments in relation to recreational boating and yachting activities, Section 20.6, 20.8 and 20.9.
Department of energy and climate change guidance notes on applying for safety zones around offshore renewable energy installations (DECC, 2011)	Provides guidance for the application of safety zones around offshore renewable energy developments, Section 20.7.2.
Guidance on Environmental Impact Assessment of Offshore Renewable Energy Development on Surfing Resources and Recreation (Surfers Against Sewage (SAS, 2009))	Provides guidance for Environmental Impact Assessment of offshore wind on surfing and recreational activities, Section 20.8 and 20.9.

20.3 SCOPING AND CONSULTATION

20.3.1 OVERVIEW

20.3.1.1 This section describes the stakeholder engagement undertaken for the Offshore Project. This consists of early engagement, the outcome of, and response to, the Scoping Opinion (MD-LOT, 2024) in relation to the Other Sea Users and Recreation assessment, informal consultation and consultation undertaken through the Preliminary Application Consultation (PAC) process (hereafter referred to as the 'formal consultation'). An overview of engagement undertaken for the Project as

a whole can be found in **Chapter 5: Approach to EIA, Volume 1a** and **Appendix 5.4: Stakeholder Consultation and Engagement, Volume 1c**.

20.3.1.2 Consultation is a key feature of the EIA process and continues throughout the lifecycle of the Project, from the initial stages through to consent and post consent.

20.3.1.3 Consultation captures all consultation and engagement and has been ongoing with a number of prescribed and non-prescribed consultation bodies and local authorities in relation to Other Sea Users and Recreation. All consultation to date has been undertaken in line with the process described in **Chapter 5, Volume 1a** and **Appendix 5.4, Volume 1c**. Feedback received during this process has been incorporated into the EIAR wherever possible as appropriate.

20.3.2 EARLY ENGAGEMENT

20.3.2.1 The Pre-Scoping Consultation phase took place prior to the commencement of Scoping in 2023. Initial efforts to engage with the community started in 2021 and saw a notable increase after the Applicant secured rights for the N4 Plan Option area during the ScotWind leasing round in April 2022. Following this, a series of Pre-Scoping public information events were held across 4 key locations in May 2022: Galson, Breascleite, Grinneabhat, and Stornoway, in order to introduce the wider community to the initial Project concept and seek their early feedback.

20.3.2.2 The Scoping Consultation phase took place throughout 2023. During this time the Project expanded its public facing communications and focussed on deepening its engagement with key stakeholders, statutory consultees and the wider community to ensure the EIA process was informed by local knowledge. In relation to Other Sea Users and Recreation, this included stakeholder meetings with elected members and officials of Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, the fishing community and the voluntary sector, as well as 5 targeted Scoping Workshops with statutory consultees and regulators to discuss technical topics like Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) and Seascape, Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (SLVIA) with MD-LOT, Historic Environment Scotland, NatureScot and Comhairle nan Eilean Siar.

Scoping Opinion

20.3.2.3 Spiorad na Mara Limited (hereafter referred to as 'the Applicant') submitted a Scoping Report (MD-LOT, 2024) and request for a Scoping Opinion to the Marine Directorate Licensing Operations Team (MD-LOT) in September 2023. A Scoping Opinion was received in May 2024 (MD-LOT, 2024). The Scoping Report sets out the proposed Other Sea Users and Recreation assessment methodologies, outline of the baseline data collected to date and proposed, and the scope of the assessment. The comments received in the Scoping Opinion and how these have been addressed in this EIA Report is provided in **Appendix 5.2: Response to Scoping Opinion, Volume 1c**.

20.3.2.4 A summary of those responses relevant to Other Sea Users and Recreation is shown in **Table 20-2**. Regard has also been given to other stakeholder comments that were received in relation to the Scoping Report.

Table 20-2 Scoping Opinion responses - Other Sea Users and Recreation

Consultee	Date / Document	Comment	Response/Where this is Addressed in the EIAR
MD-LOT	Scoping Opinion, May 2024	Paragraph 5.2.11.7: In terms of data sources, figure 6.12-3 of the Scoping Report presents the average weekly density of recreational vessels between 2012 and 2017. If available at the time of the EIA Report being compiled, the Scottish Ministers advise, in line with the Comhairle nan Eilean Siar representation, using more up to date recreation density data. Furthermore, the Scottish Ministers direct the Developer to the Strava Global Heatmap which may provide data on the locations of water-sports participants in the area of the Offshore Proposed Development. This is in line with the RYA representation.	The Developer defines the Study Area in Plate 20-1 as the Array Area and Offshore Corridor Area of Search with an additional 1 km boundary. Section 20.5.1 provides the methodology for baseline data gathering and data sources referenced within Section 20.6, Data sources used to inform the EIAR are outlined within Table 20-8 . The most up-to-date data has been used wherever possible, including data from the Strava Global Heatmap, and any data gaps or limitations are outlined in Section Error! Reference source not found. Specifically in relation to recreational vessel density, data from EMODnet 2017-2023 has been analysed for the assessment.
MD-LOT	Scoping Opinion, May 2024	Paragraph 5.2.11.8: With regard to baseline characterisation, the Scoping Report states that sea angling tours for wild salmon take place departing from Stornoway harbour and that there are low levels of sea angling within the area of the Offshore Proposed Development. The Scottish Ministers advise the Developer undertakes further studies into the impact to recreational fishing and how the Proposed Development will impact receptor groups such as the surfing community and local sporting estates. This is in line with the Barvas Estate Trust and Comhairle nan Eilean Siar representations.	As outlined in Section Error! Reference source not found. , a series of focus groups and interviews were carried out with local communities, residents and interest groups, including representatives of businesses in the tourism sector, to understand how these groups could be impacted by the Project. Further information is provided in Appendix 6.2: Focus Group Report, Volume 2c . On the basis of comments received in the Scoping Opinion, disturbance and disruption impacts to aquaculture, including the Barvas Estate, and

Consultee	Date / Document	Comment	Response/Where this is Addressed in the EIAR
			recreational sea angling and angling tour operators have been scoped into this assessment and are assessed in Sections 20.8.4 and 20.9.3.
MD-LOT	Scoping Opinion, May 2024	Paragraph 5.2.11.9: The Scottish Ministers broadly agree with the impact pathways proposed to be scoped into and out of the EIA Report as summarised in table 6.12-3 of the Scoping Report. However, consideration of the loss of fishing grounds, as well as any temporary or permanent displacement to recreational users of the sea should be scoped into the EIA Report. This is in line with the Comhairle nan Eilean Siar representation. Table 8.2-2 of the Scoping Report scopes in the impact to employment as the Proposed Development may bring additional job opportunities to the Isle of Lewis. The Scottish Ministers advise that the impact of the increase in workers to the Isle of Lewis on essential services such as harbour management, marine maintenance and ferry crewing should also be scoped in for further assessment. This is in line with the RYA representation.	<p>Potential receptors and effects considered within this chapter are detailed within Section 20.4.4 and 20.4.5, respectively.</p> <p>Loss of access to commercial fishing grounds is fully assessed in Chapter 21, Volume 2a. This chapter considers impacts to local aquaculture companies (Section Error! Reference source not found. and 20.9.1) and small ports (Section Error! Reference source not found. and 20.9.2) given the intrinsic links between these receptors.</p> <p>Temporary displacement/disturbance to recreational sea anglers is assessed in Section 20.8.4 and permanent displacement/disturbance to recreational sea anglers is assessed in Section 20.9.3.</p> <p>Impacts to harbour management and maintenance, in consideration of an increased workforce, are assessed in Section Error! Reference source not found. and 20.9.2. In relation to this, beneficial economic and socio-economic impacts are considered in Chapter 6, Volume 2a.</p> <p>Further socio-economic impacts are considered and assessed in Chapter 6, Volume 2a.</p>
MD-LOT	Scoping Opinion, May 2024	Paragraph 5.2.11.10: The Scottish Ministers are broadly content with the proposed qualitative assessment outlined in	The methodology for assessment is outlined in Section 20.5.2.

Consultee	Date / Document	Comment	Response/Where this is Addressed in the EIAR
		<p>section 6.12.6.4 of the Scoping Report, however encourage the Developer to engage with recreational stakeholders in the area of the Proposed Development. This is in line with the Comhairle nan Eilean Siar representation.</p>	<p>As outlined in Section Error! Reference source not found., a series of focus groups and interviews were carried out with local communities, residents and interest group, including representatives of businesses in the tourism sector, to understand how these groups could be impacted by the Project. Further information is provided in Appendix 6.2: Focus Group Report, Volume 2c.</p>
MD-LOT	Scoping Opinion, May 2024	<p>Paragraph 5.2.11.11: The Scottish Ministers direct the Developer to the Sandwick Community Council and Shawbost Community Council representations which includes recommended consultees to be included in producing the EIA Report.</p>	<p>The Project has undertaken extensive consultation and has consulted with Outer Hebrides/<i>Na h-Eileanan Siar</i> Tourism, Visits Scotland and Historic Environment Scotland. Other relevant consultees who have been directly engaged with as part of the Scoping Opinion and wider Project engagement also include the Barvas Estate Trust, all the Isle of Lewis/<i>Eilean Leòdhais</i> community councils, local fishermen, Outer Hebrides/<i>Na h-Eileanan Siar</i> Regional Inshore Fisheries Group, fisheries associations, including members of the Western Isle Fisheries Association, and the Crofting Commission, Stornoway Sea Angling Club, Seatrek, Scottish Surfing Federation, Surf Lewis, Scottish Canoe Association and Cruising Association amongst others.</p> <p>It should also be noted that Notices to Mariners were issued to a vast number of consultees during survey works already undertaken for the Project.</p>

Consultee	Date / Document	Comment	Response/Where this is Addressed in the EIAR
MD-LOT	Scoping Opinion, May 2024	Paragraph 5.2.11.12: The Scottish Ministers have reviewed the mitigation measures detailed in table 6.12-2 of the Screening Report and advise that the Developer considers the Comhairle nan Eilean Siar representation on additional mitigation measures that could be implemented to minimise the impact to fishing grounds for the tourism and recreational sector. Furthermore, the Scottish Ministers advise that a Notice to Mariners is insufficient and notices should also be posted at marinas and harbours and the final positioning of the WTGs should be communicated to the Clyde Cruising Club. This is in line with the RYA representation.	Mitigation measures specific to commercial fisheries are detailed within Chapter 21, Volume 2a . Embedded mitigation measures for Other Sea Users are outlined in Table 20-12 . This commitment (M012) was identified early in the Project through working closely with Council Harbour Master and Deputy Harbour Master. As such, this commitment has been included as an embedded mitigation.
Comhairle nan Eilean Siar	Scoping Opinion, May 2024	The CnES Economic Development Officer (Primary Industries) has reviewed and commented upon this Chapter. On Page 361 the statement " <i>High value sea angling tours for wild salmon are run from Stornoway harbour and take place around the Outer Hebrides (Outer Hebrides Tourism Board, 2023)</i> ". This is incorrect. There is no sea angling for wild salmon in the Western Isles. Salmon is fished for in freshwater systems and occasional saltwater estuaries from the shore but no tours are run out of Stornoway harbour for sea angling targeting wild salmon. " <i>Although outside of the Offshore Infrastructure, salmon migration routes will be considered by the project and findings on any impact on catch rate will be considered. Chapter 6.9: Commercial Fisheries of this Scoping Report provides a review of the impacts on wild salmon fishing activity. The Barvas Estate would be one of the main sporting estates affected as they control the fishing rights for the</i>	This information is acknowledged and has been incorporated into the Section 20.6 to inform the baseline environment. The Barvas/ <i>Barabhas</i> or <i>Barbhas</i> Hatchery operated by Bakkafrost Scotland is considered and assessed in this chapter in Section Error! Reference source not found. and 20.9.1 within the 'multinational companies' receptor group as outlined in Table 20-5 . Impacts to Atlantic salmon and migratory fish species are assessed in Chapter 12, Volume 2a .

Consultee	Date / Document	Comment	Response/Where this is Addressed in the EIAR
		<p>Barvas system as well as Arnol, and Garrynahine all of which see good number of salmon and sea trout each year. The Carloway system is owned and controlled by the community and have a regular run of salmon and they should be consulted here too. Other sporting estates will have fish that will run past the development site as well and should be considered further.</p>	
Comhairle nan Eilean Siar	Scoping Opinion, May 2024	<p>1. <i>Do you agree that the data sources identified are sufficient to inform the Offshore Infrastructure, baseline for the EIA (and therefore that no further baseline data collection is merited)?</i> Figure 6.12-3 Average weekly density of recreational vessels, 2012-2017. Is up to date information available. On page 360, "Low activity levels of sea angling are associated with the Offshore Development Area of Search." Recreational Sea angling boats as well as Stornoway Sea Angling Club fish in the area during the summer and autumn months. The Sea Angling Club fishes in the development area weekly with up to 10 to 12 paying anglers onboard.</p>	<p>The most up-to-date data has been used wherever possible and are identified in Table 20-8, and any data gaps or limitations are outlined in Section Error! Reference source not found. Specifically in relation to recreational vessel density, data from EMODnet 2017-2023 has been analysed for the assessment.</p> <p>This information on the Stornoway Sea Angling Club is acknowledged and has been incorporated into the Section 20.6 to inform the baseline environment.</p>
Comhairle nan Eilean Siar	Scoping Opinion, May 2024	<p>2. <i>Have all Offshore Infrastructure, receptors and potential likely significant effects that could result from the Project been identified?</i></p> <p>More work and information needs to be conducted on loss of these grounds to recreational users. Mitigation could include hatcheries or fisheries development programmes to stock alternative grounds and limit losses to sporting estates.</p>	<p>On the basis of comments received in the Scoping Opinion, temporary (Section 20.8.3) and permanent (Section 20.9.3) displacement/disturbance to boat tour operators, surfers and other recreational and tourism activities are assessed within this chapter. Embedded mitigations are outlined in Table 20-12.</p>
Comhairle nan Eilean Siar	Scoping Opinion, May 2024	<p>3. <i>Do you agree with the proposed approach to assessment (scoped in or out) for each of the potential likely significant</i></p>	<p>As outlined in Section Error! Reference source not found., a series of focus groups and interviews were</p>

Consultee	Date / Document	Comment	Response/Where this is Addressed in the EIAR
		<p><i>effects in the EIA Scoping Assessment table for Offshore Infrastructure, Other Sea Users, Tourism and Recreation?</i></p> <p>On the whole yes but more engagement with recreational stakeholders using the area should be undertaken.</p>	<p>carried out with local communities, residents and interest groups, including representatives of businesses in the tourism sector, to understand how these groups could be impacted by the Project. Further information is provided in Appendix 6.2: Focus Group Report, Volume 2c.</p>
Comhairle nan Eilean Siar	Scoping Opinion, May 2024	<p>4. <i>Do you agree that the embedded mitigation measures described provide a suitable means for managing and mitigating the relevant potential likely significant effects of the Project on Offshore Infrastructure, Other Sea Users, Tourism and Recreation receptors?</i></p> <p>Re seeding and hatchery programmes should be included in the study to mitigate loss of fish species and loss of fishing grounds to the tourism and recreational sector.</p>	<p>Embedded mitigations are outlined in Table 20-12. Loss of access to commercial fishing grounds is fully assessed in Chapter 21, Volume 2a. This chapter considers impacts to local aquaculture companies (Section Error! Reference source not found. and 20.9.1) and small ports (Section Error! Reference source not found. and 20.9.2) given the intrinsic links between these receptors.</p>
Sandwick Community Council	Scoping Opinion, May 2024	<p>The assessment currently only identifies Tourism and Recreation at sea. It should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Temporary/Permanent displacement of Tourism businesses and Recreational activities on the west side of Lewis, and Lewis wide. • Bodies like Outer Hebrides Tourism, the Western Isles Tour Guides Association, • Visit Scotland, HES, should be consultees. • Recreational density is high on westside costal areas, beaches and moorland areas. - • walkers, surfers, dog-walkers, ornithologists, botanists, wind-surfers, surfers, sea swimmers, 	<p>The Project has undertaken extensive consultation and has consulted with Outer Hebrides/<i>Na h-Eileanan Siar</i> Tourism, Visits Scotland and Historic Environment Scotland. Other relevant consultees also include the Barvas Estate Trust, all the Isle of Lewis/<i>Eilean Leòdhais</i> community councils, local fishermen, Outer Hebrides/<i>Na h-Eileanan Siar</i> Regional Inshore Fisheries Group, fisheries associations, including members of the Western Isle Fisheries Association, and the Crofting Commission, Stornoway Sea Angling Club, Seatrek, Scottish Surfing Federation, Surf Lewis,</p>

Consultee	Date / Document	Comment	Response/Where this is Addressed in the EIAR
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scuba divers visitors to cemetery and places of historical interest. Desktop assessment isn't sufficient – in situ research is required to determine what this means for the local economy and for the livelihoods of islanders. 	<p>Scottish Canoe Association and Cruising Association amongst others.</p> <p>Post-scoping consultation undertaken specifically for Other Sea Users and Recreation is detailed in Table 20-4. Details of further consultation is described in Appendix 5.4 Stakeholder Consultation and Engagement, Volume 1c and consultation feedback is presented in the Offshore PAC Report.</p>
Shawbost Community Council	Scoping Opinion, May 2024	<p>This only includes Tourism and Recreation at sea. It should include: Temporary/Permanent displacement of Tourism businesses and Recreational activities on the west side of Lewis, and Lewis wide.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bodies like Outer Hebrides Tourism, the Western Isles Tour Guides Association, Visit Scotland, HES, should be consultees. Recreational density is high on Bragar machair - walkers, surfers, dog-walkers, ornithologists, botanists, wind-surfers, visitors to cemetery and Teampall Eoin Scheduled Monument. There are a number of Coastal Rowing groups operating along the West Side. A request has been made from these groups to be made statutory consultees. These groups include RowFlo and An Eathar. Desktop assessment isn't sufficient – in situ research is required to determine what this means for the local economy and for the livelihoods of islanders. 	<p>On the basis of comments received in the Scoping Opinion, temporary (Section 20.8.3) and permanent (Section 20.9.3) displacement/disturbance to boat tour operators, surfers and other recreational and tourism activities are assessed within this chapter.</p> <p>The baseline environment has been informed by the most up-to-date data has been used wherever possible and data sources are identified in Table 20-8, and any data gaps or limitations are outlined in Section Error! Reference source not found.</p> <p>This chapter also considers the potential for onshore tourism and recreation receptors to be affected by the Offshore Project and where there is a pathway of effect for onshore elements of the Project to impact offshore receptors in Section 20.12.</p>

Consultee	Date / Document	Comment	Response/Where this is Addressed in the EIAR
MD-LOT	Scoping Opinion, May 2024	<p>This section should include under Potential Likely Significant Effects (both Construction and Decommissioning and Operation and Maintenance):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Temporary/Permanent displacement of Tourism Businesses and recreational activities on the west side of Lewis. • Temporary/permanent displacement of traditional crofting/fishing activities. 	<p>On the basis of comments received in the Scoping Opinion, temporary construction/decommissioning (Section 20.8.3) and permanent operation and maintenance (Section 20.9.3) displacement/disturbance to boat tour operators, surfers and other recreational and tourism activities are assessed within this chapter. Socio-economic and cultural impacts to traditional crofting and fishing activities are considered in Chapter 6, Volume 2a.</p>
RYA Scotland	Scoping Opinion, May 2024	<p><i>Do you agree that the data sources identified are sufficient to inform the Offshore Infrastructure, Other Sea Users, Tourism and Recreation baseline for the EIA (and therefore that no further baseline data collection is merited)?</i></p> <p>The Strava Global Heatmap plots the position of Strava enabled devices that might be carried by a range of water-sports participants.</p>	<p>Data from the Strava Global Heatmap has been considered to inform the baseline environment in Section 20.6. A list of data sources is outlined in Table 20-8.</p>
RYA Scotland	Scoping Opinion, May 2024	<p><i>Have all Offshore Infrastructure, Other Sea Users, Tourism and Recreation receptors and potential likely significant effects that could result from the Project been identified?</i> The list seems complete, but I am unable to answer on behalf of other sectors.</p>	<p>Potential receptors are identified in Table 20-5 and potential effects are identified in Table 20-6.</p>
RYA Scotland	Scoping Opinion, May 2024	<p><i>Do you agree with the proposed approach to assessment (scoped in or out) for each of the potential likely significant effects in the EIA Scoping Assessment table for Offshore Infrastructure, Other Sea Users, Tourism and Recreation?</i> Yes. The project will provide a welcome range of job</p>	<p>On the basis of comments received in the Scoping Opinion, temporary and permanent impacts to harbour management and marine maintenance are considered in Sections Error! Reference source not found. and 20.9.2. Beneficial economic and socio-</p>

Consultee	Date / Document	Comment	Response/Where this is Addressed in the EIAR
		<p>opportunities, many for skilled engineers and seafarers. However, the SEA should perhaps consider the implications of this for the provision of essential services in the Western Isles such as marine maintenance and repair, harbour management and ferry crewing.</p>	<p>economic impacts are also considered in Chapter 6, Volume 2a.</p>
RYA Scotland	Scoping Opinion, May 2024	<p><i>Do you agree that the embedded mitigation measures described provide a suitable means for managing and mitigating the relevant potential likely significant effects of the Project on Offshore Infrastructure, Other Sea Users, Tourism and Recreation receptors.</i></p> <p>Issuing Notices to Mariners by itself is not enough. They must be posted at marinas and harbours within a few days' sail, including at the Orkney marinas. The position of the turbines should be communicated to the Clyde Cruising Club (sailingdirections@clyde.org) once they have been installed so that an update can be issued for the relevant volume of their sailing directions. It would be helpful if the wording of the embedded mitigations was consistent between Tables 6.10-4 and 6.12-2. Adhering to the ColRegs and SOLAS is a legal requirement not a mitigation that a developer can choose to adopt or not.</p>	<p>Embedded mitigation measures are outlined in Table 20-12. This commitment was identified early in the Project through working closely with Council Harbour Master and Deputy Harbour Master. As such, this commitment has been included as an embedded mitigation.</p> <p>Navigational impacts are further considered in Chapter 16, Volume 2a. The Navigational Risk Assessment (NRA) is set out in Appendix 16.1, Volume 2c and has been informed by hazard workshops attended by the RYA and aquaculture stakeholders on 25 Feb 2025. During the hazard workshop key maritime hazards associated with the construction, operation and maintenance, and decommissioning of the Project were identified and discussed.</p>

20.3.3 POST SCOPING CONSULTATION

20.3.3.1 Following the receipt of the Scoping Opinion, further consultation relating to Other Sea Users and Recreation has been held with a number of stakeholders. A summary of this consultation is detailed in **Table 20-4**.

Focus Groups and Targeted engagement

20.3.3.2 Targeted engagement was carried out on the Isle of Lewis/*Eilean Leòdhais* through focus groups and individual interviews with affected communities including local communities, residents and interest groups, such as representatives of businesses in the tourism sector, who may be directly impacted by the Offshore Project. The objectives of this engagement were to:

- Identify characteristics and values which might underpin community concerns or priorities;
- Identify perceived social and economic impacts of the development proposals and compare those impacts with those which had already been identified through desk-based research, scoping responses and other consultation responses;
- Understand broad groupings of communities and gather information on how impacts arising from the Offshore Project might affect different people and areas in different ways to inform the definition of meaningful epicentres of impact and how they may change;
- Gather local knowledge and experience to gain a greater understanding of how the values and past experiences of the community underpin concerns or priorities with respect to the Project;
- Gather the community's views on potential mitigation strategies to enhance positive or neutral impacts and reduce negative impacts.

20.3.3.3 A total of 38 participants took part in 6 focus groups held in July and August 2024 in *Carloway/Càrlabhadh*, *Barvas/Barabhas or Barbhas*, *Stornoway/Steòrnabhagh*, and *Berneria Estates*, as requested by participants. The 6 focus groups were further supplemented by 4 community interviews with individuals or couples.

20.3.3.4 The key themes of the focus group discussions in relation to Other Sea Users and Recreation revolved around potential impacts to community and local culture, particularly due to potential impacts to landscape character and community identity on the west coast of the Isle of Lewis/*Leòdhais*. These discussions identified crofters, fishers, surfers and other coastal recreation groups like tourism businesses to be dependent on landscape resources. As such, recreational sea angling, surfing and other coastal recreation activities are considered within this chapter. Commercial fisheries are considered in **Chapter 21, Volume 2a** and socio-economic and cultural impacts to crofters are considered in **Chapter 6, Volume 2a**.

20.3.3.5 The findings of engagement have informed the baseline and methodology for this chapter. **Appendix 6.2: Focus Group Report, Volume 2c** provides further detail on this engagement, including the methodology and ethical considerations.

Stakeholder Interviews

20.3.3.6 Alongside the focus groups and community interviews, a series of stakeholder interviews were conducted with local organisations in 2024 to gather further baseline information. A summary of key messages from these interviews relevant to Other Sea Users and Recreation is provided in **Table 20-3**.

Table 20-3: Key messages from stakeholder interviews

Organisation	Date	Key messages	Where this is addressed in the EIAR
Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE)	June 2024	HIE commented on the potential cumulative effects on the local economy from the temporary construction workforce associated with the Project and other renewable energy developments, including knock-on effects on the supply chain, and possible shortages due to increased demand for goods and labour.	Increased demand on port services is considered in Section 20.8.2 and 20.9.2 of this chapter. Whole Project effects relating to port services and ferries is further considered in Section 20.12. Cumulative effects on the local economy are assessed in Chapter 6, Volume 2a .
Western Isles Fishermen's Association (WIFA) / Outer Hebrides Inshore Fisheries Group (OHIFG)	August 2024	WIFA / OHIFG provided baseline information, commented on the potential impacts of the Project on commercial fisheries – particularly in relation to loss of access to fishing areas – and suggested potential mitigation measures.	Effects on commercial fisheries are assessed in Chapter 21, Volume 2a of this EIAR. This includes consideration of changes in access to fishing areas. Further mitigation measures relevant to commercial fisheries will be secured through a Fisheries Mitigation, Monitoring and Communication Plan (FMMCP), Volume 3 . Wider socio-economic effects on the commercial fisheries, aquaculture, fish and shellfish processing sector are assessed in Chapter 6, Volume 2a .
Outer Hebrides Tourism	August 2024	Outer Hebrides Tourism commented that reduced ferry capacity and pressures on accommodation provision could result in impacts on tourism, and suggested potential mitigation measures.	Increased demand on port services is considered in Section 20.8.2 and 20.9.2. Whole Project effects relating to port services and ferries is further considered in Section 20.12. Additional demand for ferries and for tourism accommodation from the Project workforce are considered as part of the assessment of wider socio-economic effects on the

Organisation	Date	Key messages	Where this is addressed in the EIAR
			tourism sector, in Chapter 6, Volume 2a.
Surf Lewis / Outer Hebrides Surfing Association	September 2024	Surf Lewis commented on the importance of the west coast of Lewis as a surfing destination, the potential impacts of the Project on surfing, and suggested potential mitigation measures. Potential impacts raised included: impacts on wave action, changes to coastal access, water quality, noise pollution, shadow flicker, wellbeing effects for recreational users of the coast, and depopulation due to the reduced appeal of the Western Isles to recreational users.	Loss of access and associated displacement effects on surfing are assessed in Section 20.8.3 and 20.9.3. Effects on the local population and demographics and wider socio-economic effects on the tourism sector are assessed in Chapter 6, Volume 2a. Section 20.9.6 includes consideration of impacts on wave resource from changes to hydrodynamic regime on surfers. Water quality is assessed separately in Chapter 10, Volume 2a. Shadow flicker is scoped out of the assessment in this ES as it is not expected that there would be any impacts due to the distance of the Turbine Area from the shore.
Barvas Estate	September 2024	Barvas Estate commented on the visual impact of the Project on communities on the west coast of Lewis and the implications that this could have for the tourism sector and for the wider economy of the west coast in terms of potential impacts on visitor numbers and visitor spending.	The visual impacts of the Offshore Project are assessed in Chapter 18, Volume 2a. Amenity effects on tourism and recreation receptors, arising from a combination of visual and noise impacts, are assessed in Section 20.8.5 and 20.9.5 and whole Project amenity effects on tourism and recreation receptors are further considered in Section 20.12. Visual effects on human health are considered in Chapter 22, Volume 2a and socio-economic factors like housing and the tourism economy are considered in Chapter 6, Volume 2a.
CnES	October 2024	CnES noted that the development of the island economy is a priority. They also commented on the visual impacts of the Project and on potential impacts on housing, and suggested potential mitigation measures.	

Pre-Application Consultation

20.3.3.7 As part of the formal Pre-Application Consultation (PAC) process, as required by the Marine Scotland Act 2010 and the Marine Licensing (Pre-Application Consultation (Scotland) Regulations 2013, Public Consultation 1 (PC1) and Public Consultation 2 (PC2) were undertaken in 2024 and 2025, respectively. The full PAC process is detailed in the **Offshore PAC Report.**

20.3.3.8 Both PC1 and PC2 consisted of a 1-month long virtual exhibition supported by several public exhibitions at community venues across the Isle of Lewis/*Eilean Leòdhais*, small scale local information clinics and stakeholder briefings.

20.3.3.9 Similar themes were raised by participants in both PC1 and PC2. In relation to Other Sea Users and Recreation, the key feedback received included concerns regarding potential visual impacts from the Offshore Project on tourism on the west coast of the Isle of Lewis/*Leòdhais*, the impact to local communities and Gaelic culture particularly during construction, impacts to local surfing spots and other recreational activities due to changes in underwater swells from the Offshore Project, and overarching concerns that the Project could have a negative impact on the tourism and hospitality sectors on the west coast of the island, as the local wildlife and environment are key drivers of tourism.

Table 20-4 Summary of post scoping consultation relevant to Other Sea Users and Recreation

Consultee	Date / Document	Comment	Response/where this is addressed in the EIAR
Bakkafrost Scotland	Aquaculture Meeting 31 August 2025	<p>Attendees acknowledged updates provided regarding the revised Offshore Cable Area of Search. No comments were raised in relation to the Other Sea users Tourism and Recreation Study Area and attendees did not identify any additional aquaculture sites to be included within the baseline. Aquaculture impacts scoped into the assessment were present and no additional impacts were raised by attendees.</p> <p>Fish farm support vessels were discussed, noting that large vessels transporting fin fish have been identified to generally transit south of the Array Area through the Offshore Cable Area of Search as identified through vessel traffic surveys. An action was taken for attendees to share further information to support understanding of Bakkafrost vessel operations within the baseline environment.</p>	<p>The Study Area is presented in Section 20.4.2 and the baseline environment for aquaculture, including sites identified, is presented in Section 20.6.1.1. Impacts scoped into the assessment are outlined in Table 20-6.</p> <p>Data sources used to inform the baseline environment are presented in Table 20-8, this includes information provided by Bakkafrost Scotland to inform vessel operations.</p>
Barvas Estate	Aquaculture Meeting 31 August 2025	<p>Attendees acknowledged updates provided regarding the revised Offshore Cable Area of Search. No comments were raised in relation to the Other Sea users Tourism and Recreation Study Area and attendees did not identify any additional aquaculture sites to be included within the baseline. Aquaculture impacts scoped into the assessment were present and no additional impacts were raised by attendees.</p>	<p>The Study Area is presented in Section 20.4.2 and the baseline environment for aquaculture, including sites identified, is presented in Section 20.6.1.1. Impacts scoped into the assessment are outlined in Table 20-6.</p> <p>The Barvas/<i>Barabhas</i> or <i>Barbhas</i> Hatchery based within the Barvas Estate is described in Section 20.6.1.8 and includes the information presented during the meeting.</p>

Consultee	Date / Document	Comment	Response/where this is addressed in the EIAR
		<p>Attendees noted that the rights to the river systems within the Barvas Estate were sold to Reith Ecosse Ltd. and Barvas Estate lease the rights to the hatchery to their Trading Company, Urras Bharabhais (Trading) Ltd, following Bakkafrost relinquishing the lease of the hatchery.</p>	

20.4 SCOPE OF THE ASSESSMENT

20.4.1 OVERVIEW

20.4.1.1 This section sets out the scope of the EIAR for Other Sea Users and Recreation. This scope has been developed as the Offshore Project design has evolved and responds to feedback received to date as set out in Section 20.3.

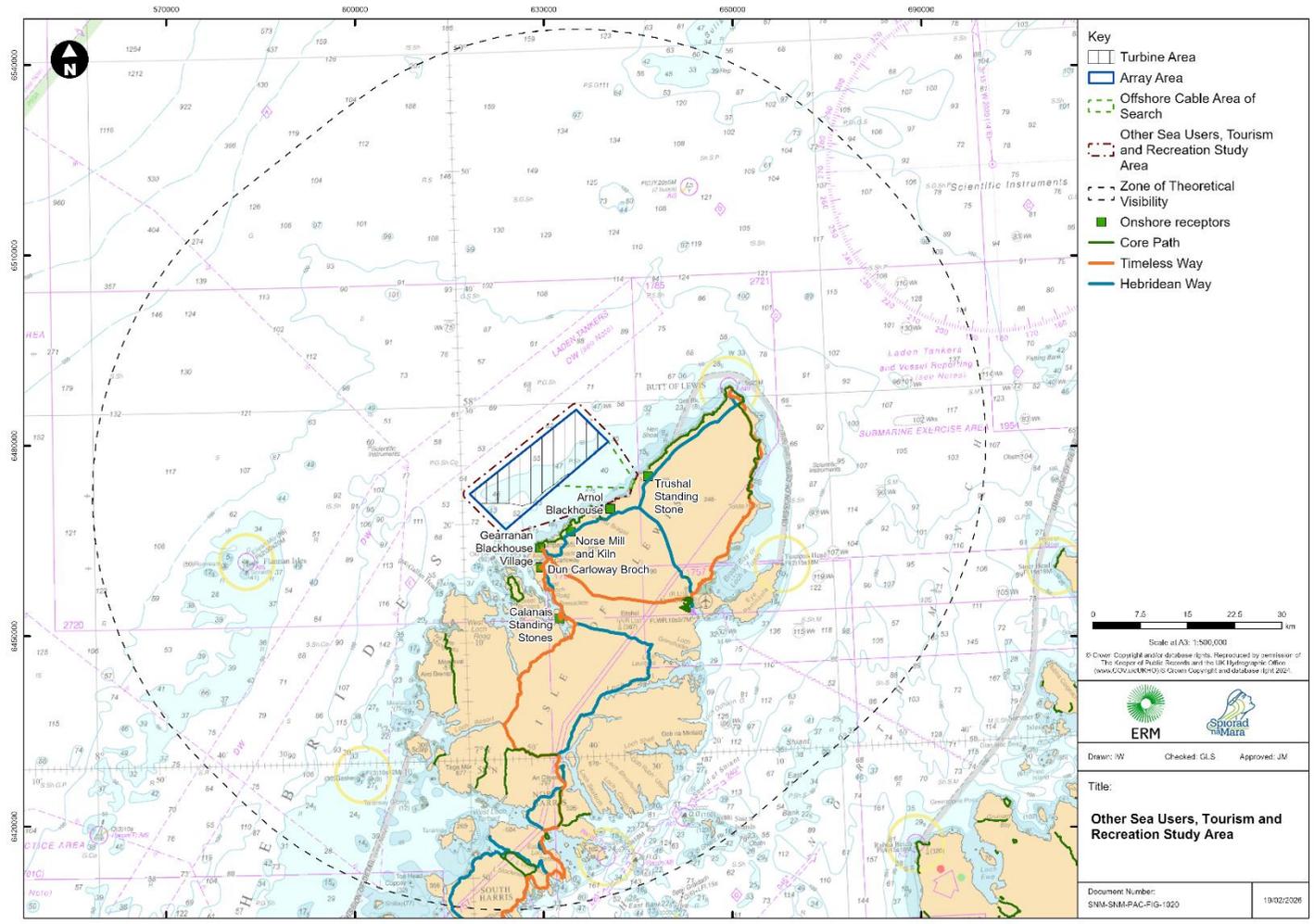
20.4.1.2 Effects on tourists and recreational users arising from the construction, O&M and decommissioning of the Onshore Project are scoped out of this chapter and will be considered in the Onshore Application. Only where there is a pathway of effect for onshore elements of the Project to impact offshore receptors is this considered in Section 20.12. Socio-economics effects arising from impacts on tourism and recreation receptors are scoped out of this chapter and are instead assessed in **Chapter 6, Volume 2a**.

20.4.2 SPATIAL SCOPE AND STUDY AREA

20.4.2.1 The spatial scope of the Other Sea Users and Recreation assessment is defined as the Array Area and Offshore Cable Area of Search plus a 1 km buffer surrounding the Offshore Project that has formed the basis of the Other Sea Users and Recreation Study Area (hereafter referred to as the 'Study Area') described in this section and as per the Scoping Report (Spiorad na Mara Limited, 2023) (**Plate 20-1**). The area within the Array Area and Offshore Cable Area of Search will represent an area where direct impacts to Other Sea Users and Recreation have the potential to occur, whilst the potential for indirect impacts will be assessed within the 1 km buffer surrounding the Offshore Project.

20.4.2.2 In order to assess effects for tourism and recreation receptors located onshore arising from changes in amenity from noise and visual impacts associated with the Offshore Project, a 60 km Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) has been included for assessment (**Plate 20-1**) as defined by **Chapter 18, Volume 2a**.

Plate 20-1 Other Sea Users and Recreation Study Area



20.4.3 TEMPORAL SCOPE

20.4.3.1 The temporal scope of the assessment of Other Sea Users and Recreation is the entire lifetime of the Offshore Project, which therefore covers the 5 year offshore construction period scheduled to take place between April - October each year (except for Horizontal Directional Drilling (HDD) works which may occur year-round). The Operation and Maintenance (O&M) phase is expected to last for a minimum of 35 years. It is anticipated that the decommissioning phase will consist of the reverse of the construction phase, including a similar duration.

20.4.4 POTENTIAL RECEPTORS

20.4.4.1 The spatial and temporal scope of the assessment enables the identification of receptors which may experience a change as a result of the Offshore Project. The receptors identified that may experience likely significant effects for Other Sea Users and Recreation are outlined in **Table 20-5**.

Table 20-5 Receptors requiring assessment for Other Sea Users and Recreation

Receptor Group	Receptors included within Group
Aquaculture companies and operators	Bakkafrost Scotland
	Loch Fyne Oysters Ltd
	Uig Seafare Ltd
	Loch Carloway Shellfish Ltd
Ports, harbours, slipways and marinas	Stornoway port (main port)
	Small ports (including Carloway, Breasclete, Bernera, Bragar and Miavaig etc.)
	Slipways (including Bragar/ <i>Bhràdhagair</i> Slipway and slipways located at ports)
	Passenger ferries
Boat tour operators and other sea users and tourists	Boat tour operators
Recreational sea anglers and angling tour operators	Recreational sea anglers
	Angling specific boat tour operators
Other Sea Users	Recreational sea anglers
	Surfers
	Other recreational users (open water swimming, scuba diving, sailing, snorkelling, kitesurfing, kayaking, canoeing paddle boarding etc.)
	Tourists/visitors/other beach users
Onshore tourism and recreation assets	Tourism attractions
	Core paths and other rights of way
	Tourism accommodation

20.4.5 POTENTIAL EFFECTS

20.4.5.1 Potential impacts on Other Sea Users and Recreation receptors that have been scoped in for assessment are summarised in **Table 20-6**.

Table 20-6 Activities or impacts scoped into the assessment for Other Sea Users and Recreation

Receptor	Activity or Impact	Potential Effect
Construction and Decommissioning		
Aquaculture companies and operators	Loss of access to aquaculture support vessels due to the presence of installation safety zones and construction activities	Temporary disruption/displacement to aquaculture support vessels, such as increased steaming times
Ports, harbours and slipways	Increased demand for port services during construction	Temporary disruption to ports and harbours due to presence of Project vessels
Boat tour operators, surfers and other sea users and tourists (excl. recreational anglers)	Loss of access to boat tour routes, surfers and other sea users due to installation safety zones and construction activities	Temporary displacement/disturbance to boat tour operators, surfers or other sea users
Recreational sea anglers and angling tour operators	Loss of access to recreational sea anglers and specific angling tour operators due to the presence of installation safety zones and construction activities	Temporary displacement/disturbance to recreational sea anglers and specific angling tour operators
Other sea users and onshore tourism and recreation assets, including core paths, other rights of way, and tourism accommodation	Visual and noise impacts as a result of offshore construction activities	Amenity effects from a combination of visual and noise impacts and reduction in amenity value for other sea users and onshore tourism and recreational users
Operation and Maintenance		
Aquaculture companies and operators	Loss of access to aquaculture support vessels due to the presence of surface piercing infrastructure and O&M activities	Permanent displacement from discrete areas where surface piercing infrastructure is installed and temporary disruption to aquaculture support vessels, such as increased steaming times

Receptor	Activity or Impact	Potential Effect
Ports, harbours and slipways	Increased demand for port services during O&M	Temporary disruption to ports and harbours due to presence of Project vessels
Boat tour, surfers and operators and other sea users and tourists (excl. recreational anglers)	Loss of access to boat tour routes, surfers and other sea users due to the presence of surface piercing infrastructure and O&M activities	Permanent displacement from discrete areas where surface piercing infrastructure is installed and temporary disruption to boat tour routes, surfers and other sea users during O&M activities
Recreational sea anglers and angling tour operators	Loss of access to recreational sea anglers and specific angling tour operators due to the presence of surface piercing infrastructure and O&M activities	Permanent displacement from discrete areas where surface piercing infrastructure is installed and temporary disruption to recreational sea anglers and specific angling tour operators during O&M activities
Other sea users and onshore tourism and recreation assets, including core paths, other rights of way, and tourism accommodation	Permanent visual effects as a result of permanent offshore surface piercing infrastructure	Amenity effects and reduction in amenity value other sea users and onshore tourism and recreational users
Surfers	Changes to hydrodynamic regime due to presence of Offshore Project infrastructure	Effects on wave resource and surf quality

20.4.6 ACTIVITIES OR IMPACTS SCOPED OUT OF ASSESSMENT

20.4.6.1 A number of potential effects have been scoped out from further assessment, resulting from a conclusion of no likely significant effect. These conclusions have been made based on the knowledge of the baseline environment, the nature of planned works and the wealth of evidence on the potential for impact from such projects more widely. The conclusions follow (in a site-based context) existing best practice. Each scoped out activity or impact is considered in turn in **Table 20-7**.

Table 20-7 Activities or impacts scoped out of assessment for Other Sea Users and Recreation

Activity or Impact	Rationale for Scoping Out.
Temporary disturbance to offshore infrastructure (Construction & Decommissioning)	No infrastructure (subsea cables, pipelines, oil and gas developments, aggregate extraction/disposal sites) have been recorded in the Study Area. The Offshore Project does not conflict with any known or proposed array or cable corridor areas of search, therefore there is no risk of disturbance with other offshore renewable energy projects at early concept or scoping stage. This is in line with Paragraph 5.2.11.9 of the Scoping Opinion where the Scottish Ministers broadly agreed with the impact pathways proposed to be scoped into and out of the EIAR (MD-LOT, 2024).
Barrier to other offshore renewable development projects (O&M)	The Offshore Project does not conflict with any known or proposed array or cable corridor areas of search, therefore there is no risk of disturbance with other offshore renewable energy projects at early concept or scoping stage. This is in line with Paragraph 5.2.11.9 of the Scoping Opinion where the Scottish Ministers broadly agree with the impact pathways proposed to be scoped into and out of the EIAR (MD-LOT, 2024).
Increased turbidity as a result of construction activities smothering aquaculture resource areas (Construction & Decommissioning)	The closest aquaculture site in relation to the Offshore Project is inland and therefore not likely to be affected by increased turbidity. This is in line with Paragraph 5.2.11.9 of the Scoping Opinion where the Scottish Ministers broadly agree with the impact pathways proposed to be scoped into and out of the EIAR (MD-LOT, 2024).
Temporary disturbance to commercial and artisanal seaweed harvesting activities (Construction, O&M & Decommissioning)	As commercial seaweed harvesting lease areas are outside of the Study Area (Plate 20-1) it is considered that there is no potential pathway for impacts as there is no spatial overlap with the Offshore Project given commercial seaweed harvesting is generally undertaken in the intertidal region. Similarly, small scale artisanal seaweed harvesting is generally undertaken in the intertidal region, it is considered that there is very minimal/no potential for impacts as there is no spatial overlap with the Offshore Project. Therefore, commercial and artisanal seaweed harvesting are not considered further for assessment and are scoped out.

20.4.6.2 This chapter focusses on assessing effects on Other Sea Users and Recreation receptors arising from the construction, O&M, and decommissioning of the Offshore Project. This chapter also considers the potential for effects to arise from the Offshore Project on onshore receptors of tourism and recreation.

20.4.6.3 Where there is the potential for pathways to exist for onshore elements of the Project to impact offshore receptors, these have been assessed in Section 20.12. A full assessment of effects on tourists and recreational users arising from the Onshore Project will be considered in the Onshore

Application. Socio-economics effects arising from impacts on tourism business and recreation activities are scoped out of this chapter and are instead assessed in **Chapter 6, Volume 2a**.

20.5 METHODOLOGY FOR BASELINE DATA GATHERING AND IMPACT ASSESSMENT

20.5.1 METHODOLOGY FOR BASELINE DATA GATHERING

Overview

20.5.1.1 Baseline data collection has been undertaken to obtain information over the Study Areas described in Section 20.4: Scope of the assessment. No site-specific surveys have been undertaken specifically for the assessment of Other Sea Users and Recreation. This is because receptor information and data related to this topic can be readily collected through desk-based review and consultation with relevant stakeholders. The current baseline conditions presented in Section 20.6: Baseline conditions sets out data currently available information from the Study Area/s.

Desk study

20.5.1.2 The data sources that have been collected and used to inform this Other Sea Users and Recreation assessment is summarised in **Table 20-8**.

Table 20-8 Data sources used to inform the Other Sea Users and Recreation EIA

Source	Date	Summary	Coverage of Study Area
North Scotland Sectoral Marine Plan	2020	North Scotland sectoral marine plan, which includes mapped aquaculture, subsea cables, carbon capture and storage, and oil and gas in North Scottish waters.	Full coverage of the Study Area
Marine Directorate Interactive Map (Marine Scotland, 2025)	2025	Marine Directorate interactive map data portal, including renewable energy projects, cables and pipelines, oil and gas, and aggregates spatial data layers.	Full coverage of the Study Area
Crown Estate Scotland (CES, 2025)	2025	Crown Estate Scotland asset maps for energy, aquaculture, infrastructure and ScotWind offers.	Full coverage of the Study Area
Scottish Marine Recreation and Tourism Survey (Marine Scotland, 2015)	2015	Scottish marine recreation and tourism survey for 23 different activities to provide recreation and tourism density data.	Full coverage of the Study Area

Source	Date	Summary	Coverage of Study Area
Strava Global Heatmap (Strava, 2025)	2025	Heatmapping for sporting activities, including water sports like canoeing, kayaking, kitesurfing, rowing, sailing, windsurfing, swimming, paddle boarding and surfing.	Full coverage of the Study Area
Outer Hebrides Tourism (2012)	2025	Outer Hebrides/ <i>Na h-Eileanan Siar</i> tourist industry website and tourism statistics.	Full coverage of the Study Area
Visit Scotland (2023)	2023	Scotland visitor surveys, and Outer Hebrides/ <i>Na h-Eileanan Siar</i> regional tourism statistics.	Full coverage of the Study Area
Royal Yachting Association (RYA) UK Coastal Atlas of Recreational Boating (RYA, 2019b)	2019	RYA Geographical Information System (GIS) spatial dataset of recreational boating activities, including intensity indicators and locations of clubs, training centres, and marinas	Full coverage of the Study Area
SAS water usage map (SAS, 2025)	2025	SAS interactive map showing locations of paddle boarding, surfing, swimming and other recreational water sporting activities	Full coverage of the Study Area
EMODnet Automatic Identification System (AIS) recreational vessel density (EMODnet, 2023)	2017 - 2023	Shows the annual average recreational vessel density data from 2017 - 2023	Full coverage of the Study Area
EMODnet AIS passenger vessel density (EMODnet, 2025)	2019 - 2025	Shows the average monthly total passenger vessel density data from 2019 - 2025	Full coverage of the Study Area
Site specific AIS Vessel traffic surveys	Summer 2023 Summer and winter 2024	Site specific vessel traffic surveys undertaken in summer 2023 and summer and winter 2024 by AIS, Radar and visual observation detailed within Chapter 16, Volume 2a	Full coverage of the Study Area

20.5.2 DATA LIMITATIONS AND ASSUMPTIONS

- 20.5.2.1 The Scottish Marine Recreation and Tourism Survey (Marine Scotland, 2015) provides a holistic overview of recreation and tourism activity across Scotland and on the Isle of Lewis/*Eilean Leòdhais*. However, this data is based on survey questionnaire responses which may be subject to individual interpretation of the questions. It is acknowledged that this survey was undertaken 10 years ago, and recreation and tourism activities are likely to have developed since then. To supplement this data, Strava heatmapping (Strava, 2025) for water sport activities and the SAS water usage map (SAS, 2025) were also analysed. Both datasets supported the general findings of the Scottish Marine Recreation and Tourism Survey (Marine Scotland, 2015).
- 20.5.2.2 AIS vessel density data from the European Marine Observation and Data Network (EMODnet) for annual average recreational vessel density (2017-2019) and monthly total passenger vessel density (2019-2025), is also subject to limitations (EMODnet, 2023) (EMODnet, 2025). AIS data is required for all passenger vessels and other vessels over 15 m. Therefore, smaller recreational vessels, such as cruising yachts, sailing vessels and small personal watercraft, may be underrepresented in this data set. Furthermore, passenger vessels can also be mis-represented as cargo vessels within this data set, again leading to possible underrepresentation of passenger vessel density. AIS vessel density data is generally considered to provide a good overview of key vessel transit routes and areas of increased vessel activity; however, it should be noted that the vessel densities presented may be higher in reality. This data is also both based on averages and provided at a 1 km resolution. As the data is averaged over multiple years it is considered to provide a good representation of recreational and passenger vessel density in the region, and the 1 km resolution is also considered to provide a detailed picture of vessel density at a scale relevant to Other Sea Users and Recreation.
- 20.5.2.3 Site specific vessel traffic surveys undertaken in summer 2023 and summer and winter 2024 by AIS, Radar and visual observation detailed within **Chapter 16, Volume 2a**, also support the general findings of the EMODnet data.
- 20.5.2.4 A variety of data sources outlined in **Table 20-8** have been analysed to support the desk-based assessment to reduce reliance on a single source of information and associated data limitations. Efforts have been made to incorporate the most up to date data possible which covers the full spatial extent of the Study Area. As such, acknowledging the limitations highlighted above, it is considered that the data sources used to inform the assessment of Other Sea Users and Recreation remain appropriate for this assessment.

20.5.3 METHODOLOGY FOR ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Introduction

20.5.3.1 The project-wide generic approach to the assessment is set out in **Chapter 5: Approach to EIA, Volume 1a**. The following sections provide the assessment methodology used to assess the potential impacts on Other Sea Users and Recreation only.

20.5.3.2 A matrix approach as described in **Chapter 5, Volume 1a** has been used to determine the significance of effects, by comparing impact magnitude against receptor value and sensitivity.

20.5.3.3 This methodology has been used to assess the construction, O&M, and decommissioning phases of the Offshore Project.

20.5.4 IMPACT ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

20.5.4.1 Definitions specific to Other Sea Users and Recreation to define the impact magnitude (**Table 20-9**) and sensitivity of receptors (**Table 20-10**), where value is based on social, cultural and economic value.

Magnitude

Table 20-9 Impact magnitude definitions in relation to Other Sea Users and Recreation

Impact Magnitude	Description
Negligible	Impacts are of a very short term (<1 year) duration. There is no potential for direct spatial overlap of receptors with the Study Area or very minimal change from baseline conditions.
Low	Impacts are short term (2-5 years) and temporary. There is potential for some spatial overlap (such as transiting vessels) of receptors with the Study Area or minor change from baseline conditions.
Medium	Impacts are temporary over a long-term duration (6-35 years) but are infrequent throughout this period. There is potential for spatial overlap of receptors with the Study Area or loss/alteration to baseline conditions.
High	Impacts are permanent and continuous (>35 years). There is potential for spatial overlap of receptors with the Study Area or significant/total loss/alteration to baseline conditions.

Sensitivity

Table 20-10 Sensitivity definitions in relation to Other Sea Users and Recreation

Sensitivity	Description
Negligible	The receptor or the activities of the receptor is of negligible value to the local, regional or national economy and/or the receptor or the activities of the receptor is not vulnerable to impacts that may arise from the Offshore Project and/or has recoverability.

Sensitivity	Description
Low	The receptor or the activities of the receptor is of a low value to the local, regional or national economy. The receptor or the activities of the receptor can adapt and tolerate change and is therefore able to recover rapidly (within 1 - 2 years) from any change to the baseline conditions.
Medium	The receptor or the activities of the receptor is of a medium value to the local, regional or national economy. The receptor or the activities of the receptor has limited ability to adapt and tolerate change and therefore has a limited ability to recover (within >2 years) from any change to the baseline conditions.
High	The receptor or the activities of the receptor is of a high value to the local, regional or national economy. The receptor or the activities of the receptor has no ability to adapt or tolerate change and therefore has no ability to recover from any change to the baseline conditions.

Significance

20.5.4.2 Following the identification of the magnitude of impact, features value and sensitivity it is possible to determine the significance of effect. The matrix provided in **Table 5-2** in **Chapter 5, Volume 1a** is used as a framework to aid in determination of the impact assessment and provides further detail of what effect is considered to be significant.

20.5.4.3 Embedded mitigations relevant to Other Sea Users and Recreation are detailed in **Table 20-12** and are considered throughout the assessment in Sections 20.8, 20.9 and 20.10. Where Moderate or Major adverse effects, which are Significant in EIA terms, are assessed, additional mitigation will be proposed to reduce the residual significance of effect to Negligible or Minor, which is Not Significant in EIA terms.

20.6 BASELINE CONDITIONS

20.6.1 CURRENT BASELINE

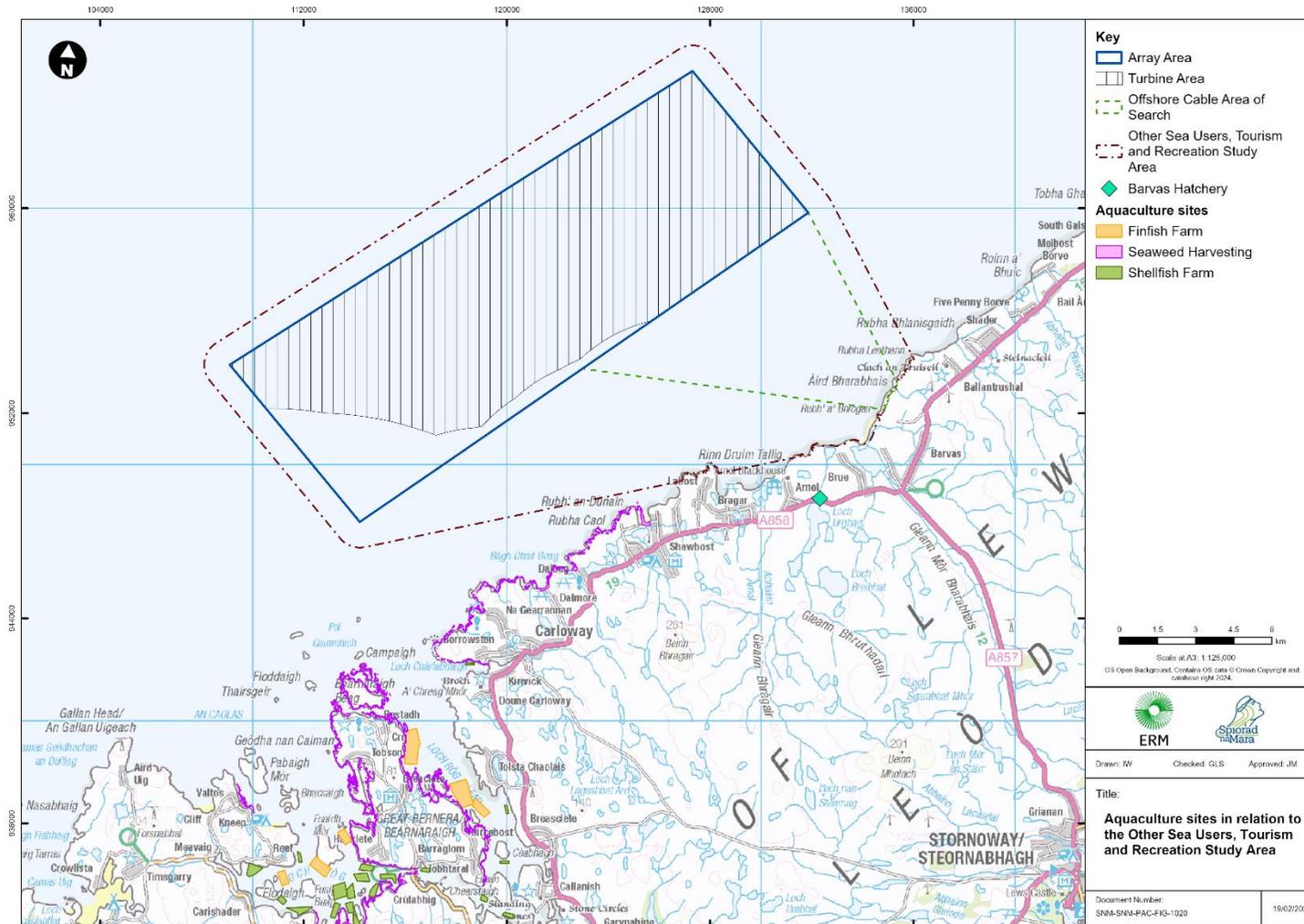
Aquaculture

20.6.1.1 Scottish salmon is the UK's biggest food export, where 101,000 tonnes of Scottish salmon was exported in 2024 (Scottish Salmon, 2025). Regionally the Outer Hebrides/*Na h-Eileanan Siar* accounts for 22,502 tonnes representing 22% of Scotland's total exports of salmon. The aquaculture sector in Scotland and the Outer Hebrides/*Na h-Eileanan Siar* is continuing to increase, with an overall 45% increase in salmon exports across Scotland. In the Outer Hebrides/*Na h-Eileanan Siar*, salmon exports have been double year on year from £92 million to £187 million in the Western Isles/*Na h-Eileanan Siar* in 2024 (Scottish Salmon, 2025). Much of this recent growth comes from demand from Asian markets, particularly in China and Taiwan, however exports to Europe still make up the majority of the total tonnage of salmon exports at 69%. Because of this,

the aquaculture and pisciculture sectors are large employers on the Isle of Lewis/*Eilean Leòdhais*. Scottish salmon shows the fish farming sector to directly support 420 jobs across the Western Isles/*Na h-Eileanan Siar* (Scottish Salmon, 2025).

20.6.1.2 There are around 70 aquaculture sites for finfish and shellfish along the coastline of the Western Isles/*Na h-Eileanan Siar*. Numerous shellfish sites are located in the south of Loch Roag/*Loch Ròg* and there are multiple finfish farms around the island of Bernera also within Loch Roag/*Loch Ròg* (CES, 2025) (**Plate 20-2**). Typical finfish species include Atlantic salmon *Salmo salar*, and cleaner fish (not for consumption) like lumpsucker *Cyclopterus lumpus*, and ballan wrasse *Labrus bergylta*, whilst common mussel *Mytilus edulis* make up the key shellfish species. The Offshore Project overlaps the Loch Roag/*Loch Ròg* salmon fishing district (Marine Scotland, 2025) which these farms are located within, however no aquaculture sites are located directly within the Study Area (**Plate 20-2**). Many of the larger finfish farms have come under recent controversy within Loch Roag/*Loch Ròg* and across Scotland due to sea lice associated with salmon farming and the impact to wild migratory salmon (Wild Fish, 2025). Impacts to fish and shellfish species associated with aquaculture, such as underwater noise impacts, are considered and assessed in **Chapter 12, Volume 2a**.

Plate 20-2 Aquaculture sites in relation to the Other Sea Users and Recreation Study Area (CES, 2025)



- 20.6.1.3 On the west of the Isle of Lewis/*Eilean Leòdhais* there are 4 aquaculture companies which operate within Loch Roag/*Loch Ròg*, 2 multi-national companies: Loch Fyne Oysters Ltd and Bakkafrost Scotland, and 2 local aquaculture companies: Uig Seafare Ltd and Loch Carloway Shellfish Ltd (Natural Scotland, 2025).
- 20.6.1.4 Bakkafrost Scotland operate all of the finfish farms within Loch Roag/*Loch Ròg*. A number of smaller landing-craft and polarcirkel RIBs facilitate the day-to-day operations at their sites within Loch Roag/*Loch Ròg*. Finfish harvesting at Bakkafrost Scotland's sites is undertaken by large Norwegian registered wellboats (a vessel with a well or tank for the storage and transport of live fish) and one Faroese registered wellboat. The finfish are harvested from the aquaculture sites within Loch Roag/*Loch Ròg* and transported via the wellboats to Bakkafrost Scotland's harvesting and processing operations in Argyll, south of the Isle of Lewis/*Eilean Leòdhais*. Finfish are also transferred to the aquaculture sites in Loch Roag/*Loch Ròg* from Bakkafrost Scotland's hatchery operations based on the west coast of Scotland.
- 20.6.1.5 Loch Fyne Oysters Ltd are also a registered company on mainland Scotland, however they are linked to Norway and Denmark. Large Norwegian and Danish vessels collect finfish direct from the farms within Loch Roag/*Loch Ròg* and process the fish onboard during transportation to Europe.
- 20.6.1.6 Wellboats and other large export and processing vessels generally travel along the northwest coast and around the Butt of Lewis/*Eilean Leòdhais* to Stornoway/*Steòrnabhagh*. Much of the vessel traffic associated with day-to-day aquaculture operations and with smaller shellfish farms within Loch Roag/*Loch Ròg* is confined to within the Loch and also along the northwestern coast of the Isle of Lewis/*Eilean Leòdhais*, south of the Array Area. This is generally supported by vessel traffic survey data. Vessel traffic surveys show 48% of vessels recorded during the 14-day winter period in 2024 to be aquaculture support vessels which were observed to transit close to the coast and within Loch Roag/*Loch Ròg*. More vessels were recorded during the 14-day summer period in 2024, where 14% were observed to be aquaculture support vessels. Marine traffic is presented in further detail in **Chapter 16, Volume 2a**.
- 20.6.1.7 Notably, the owner of the local aquaculture company Loch Carloway Shellfish Ltd also engages in commercial fishing activity within the Offshore Cable Area of Search using a mixture of pots, traps, and nets. During steaming to and from fishing along the northwest coast of the Isle of Lewis/*Eilean Leòdhais*, the fishermen are also able to service the mussel farm at Carloway/*Càrlabhadh* port. Further information on commercial fisheries is presented in **Chapter 21, Volume 2a**, and ports and harbours are presented below in more detail.
- 20.6.1.8 The closest aquaculture site to the Offshore Project is the inland Barvas/*Barabhais* or *Barbhas* Hatchery based within the Barvas Estate in Arnol/*Àrnoil*, approximately 2.8 km from the Offshore Cable Area of Search (Natural Scotland, 2025) and outside of the Study Area (**Plate 20-2**). The hatchery is used for freshwater Atlantic salmon. The rights to the Barvas/*Barabhais* or *Barbhas* Hatchery are leased by the Barvas Estate to their trading company, Urras Bharabhais (Trading) Ltd,

following the relinquishment of the lease rights by Bakkafrøst Scotland. Since the Barvas/*Barabhas or Barbhas* Hatchery is outside of the Study Area, it is considered that there is no potential for direct spatial overlap of impacts as a result of the construction, O&M and decommissioning with the Offshore Project. Therefore, impacts to the Barvas/*Barabhas or Barbhas* Hatchery from the Offshore Project are not considered further in this chapter.

- 20.6.1.9 The Barvas Estate boundary covers the Barvas/*Barabhas or Barbhas* and Arnol/*Àrnoil* river systems which are both renowned salmon and sea trout fishing rivers. The Barvas Estate have recently sold the rights to the Barvas/*Barabhas or Barbhas* and Arnol/*Àrnoil* river systems to Reith Ecosse Ltd. The Barvas Estate boundary is less than 500 m at its closest point to the Offshore Cable Area of Search. Further information on angling is provided in Section 20.6.1.45.
- 20.6.1.10 Other aquaculture sites are also located in the east of the Isle of Lewis/*Eilean Leòdhais*, south of Stornoway/*Steòrnabhagh* and particularly around Loch Eireasort/*Loch Èireasort*. Of the sites on the east of the Isle of Lewis/*Eilean Leòdhais*, the closest are located in Loch Arnish/*Àirinis*, approximately 50 m from the OTW Boundary, and in Loch Breugach/*Loch Bhreugach*, approximately 250 m from the OTW Boundary. However, both of these sites currently do not have an active lease from Crown Estate Scotland and therefore are not considered further within this assessment (CES, 2025).

Seaweed harvesting

- 20.6.1.11 Seaweed harvesting also occurs around much of the Isle of Lewis/*Eilean Leòdhais* and Harris/*Na Hearadh* coastline, with kelp (*Laminariales*) being the dominant seaweed type around rocky areas of the northwest coast of the Isle of Lewis/*Eilean Leòdhais* and extending out to within the Offshore Project (Marine Scotland, 2025). Wracks (*Furoids*) are also present around the intertidal rocky shores of the Outer Hebrides/*Na h-Eileanan Siar* including the Isle of Lewis/*Eilean Leòdhais*, as well as a patchy distribution of green and red seaweeds within the intertidal region (ABPmer, 2016). Maerl and seagrass beds can also be found in lochs and along the shores of island archipelagos, but these are less common in the Outer Hebrides/*Na h-Eileanan Siar*.
- 20.6.1.12 Commercial harvesting of kelp and wracks is primarily undertaken by a combination of hand cutting using a sickle or mechanically via a seaweed harvesting boat in the intertidal waters of the Isle of Lewis/*Eilean Leòdhais* and Harris/*Na Hearadh* all year round (ABPmer, 2016). Both hand cutting boats and mechanical seaweed harvesting vessels work close to shore and cut the seaweed stalks. The harvested seaweed is filled into sacks which are towed to shore where they are loaded onto lorries for transport. Areas of seaweed harvested are left to regenerate for 3-4 years and commercial harvesters will rotate seaweed harvesting areas to ensure a sustainable yield.
- 20.6.1.13 Commercial seaweed harvesting areas are leased from Crown Estate Scotland. Current commercial seaweed harvesting lease areas are located along the northwest coast of the Isle of Lewis/*Eilean Leòdhais* from Shawbost/*Siabost* to around the islands of Loch Roag/*Loch Ròg*, including the island Bernera/*Beàrnaraigh* (CES, 2025). Other lease areas for commercial seaweed harvesting are located

around the coastline of Broad Bay/*Loch a' Tuath*, Branahuie/*Bràigh na h-Aoidhe* Banks and Lower Bayble/*Pabail Iarach* on the east coast of the Isle of Lewis/*Eilean Leòdhais*, near Stornoway/*Steòrnabhagh* (CES, 2025). As commercial seaweed harvesting lease areas are outside of the Study Area (**Plate 20-1**) it is considered that there is no potential pathway for impacts as there is no spatial overlap with the Offshore Project given commercial seaweed harvesting is generally undertaken in the intertidal region, therefore it is not considered further for assessment and is scoped out.

20.6.1.14 Small scale (artisanal) harvesting of seaweed is undertaken by hand cutting or picking and is considered to be largely sustainable cultural tradition (ABPmer, 2016). There is a risk that small green and red seaweeds could be cleared by artisanal harvesting practices, however there is a lack of information regarding the impact of artisanal and commercial harvesting of the small seaweed species. Again, as small scale artisanal seaweed harvesting is generally undertaken in the intertidal region, it is considered that there is very minimal/no potential for impacts as there is no spatial overlap with the Offshore Project, therefore it is not considered further for assessment and is scoped out.

Ports, harbours and slipways

20.6.1.15 The main port on the Isle of Lewis/*Eilean Leòdhais* is located at Stornoway/*Steòrnabhagh* on the east coast of the Isle of Lewis/*Eilean Leòdhais* (**Plate 20-3**). Stornoway port hosts industry, passenger and tourism infrastructure including the fishing fleet, Arnish fabrication yard, commercial slipway, coastguard and lifeboat station, cruise ships and the passenger and freight ferries. The Stornoway Deep Water Terminal, which was completed in 2024, increased the capacity of the port to accommodate large cruise liners up to 360 m with a water depth of 10.5 m (HIE, 2025), and to support fabrication and transportation of renewable energy components. The inner harbour also has a marina for small yachts. Construction of the Stornoway Deep Water Terminal is part of larger 20-year Stornoway Port Authority Master Plan (2017) which aims to support the growing tourism industry and maximise opportunities in the energy sector.

20.6.1.16 Other local ports and harbours along the northwest coast of the Isle of Lewis/*Eilean Leòdhais* and south of the Offshore Project are located within Loch Roag/*Loch Ròg* and include Carloway/*Càrlabhadh*, Breascalete/*Brèascleit*, Bernera/*Beàrnaraigh*, and Miavaig/*Mìobhaig* (Marine Scotland, 2025) (**Plate 20-3**). The statutory harbour limits of these ports extend throughout Loch Roag/*Loch Ròg*. Carloway/*Càrlabhadh* and Breascalete/*Brèascleit* are small ports mainly used for local fishing vessels and small leisure craft. Bernera/*Beàrnaraigh* port is another small port located on a rocky island in the middle of Loch Roag/*Loch Ròg*. Bernera/*Beàrnaraigh* island attracts tourists for its beaches, historical Viking settlements and Gaelic culture. The island is connected to the mainland of the Isle of Lewis/*Eilean Leòdhais* via a narrow bridge, so the port is not the only way to access the island, however the port remains a vital connection to Lewis/*Eilean Leòdhais*. Again, Bernera/*Beàrnaraigh* port is primarily used for leisure craft, small boat tours and local fishing vessels, with many lobster settlements fringed around the island (Visit Scotland, 2025). Lastly,

Miavaig/*Miobhaig* port offers a community owned slipway and two visitor berths as well as a small pontoon on the western side of Loch Roag/*Loch Ròg* (Visit Outer Hebrides, 2025).

20.6.1.17 These ports are all heavily dependent on local fishing and tourism and would be adversely impacted by even small changes in use by fishing and/or tourism and recreation vessels since they often only berth a few vessels at any one time. Large offshore vessels occasionally use Loch Roag/*Loch Ròg* as an anchorage area during adverse weather conditions, however the closest designated safe port and anchorage area for larger vessels is located at Stornoway/*Steòrnabhagh*.

Slipways and Jetties

20.6.1.18 Several slipways and jetties are located along the west coast of the Isle of Lewis/*Eilean Leòdhais* for use by small boats, pleasure craft and local fishing vessels. Slipways act as a community resource as it is common for individuals in Hebridean communities to own small boats for recreational fishing, sea angling and pleasure, which are launched from community slipways. Slipways may also be used for recreation such as launching kayaks.

20.6.1.19 Bragar/*Bhràdhagair* Slipway is one of the closest slipways to the Offshore Project, located approximately 1.5 km south of the Offshore Cable Area of Search, between Arnol/*Àrnoil* and Labost/*Àirigh nan Crodh*. The Bragar/*Bhràdhagair* Slipway was recently constructed in particular for small boats to use on the west of the Isle of Lewis/*Eilean Leòdhais*. Other slipways on the west of the Isle of Lewis/*Eilean Leòdhais* are located at Caloway/*Càrlabagh*, Miavaig/*Miobhaig*, Kirkibost/*Eilean Chirceaboist* Pier and Breasclate/*Brèasclait* Pier on Bernera/*Beàrnaraigh* and Portnaguran/*Port nan Giùran* in north the Isle of Lewis/*Eilean Leòdhais* and the community owned slipway is at Cuddy Point/*Ruba Nan Cudaigean* at Stornoway/*Steòrnabhagh* port, and Port of Ness/*Port Nis* slipway on the east coast of the Isle of Lewis/*Eilean Leòdhais* (Visit Outer Hebrides, 2025).

Ferries, passenger vessels and boat tour operators

20.6.1.20 This section focusses on ferries, passenger vessels and recreational boat tour operators, however marine traffic is presented in further detail in **Chapter 16, Volume 2a**.

20.6.1.21 In 2022, 64 cruise ships called at Stornoway/*Steòrnabhagh* carrying a total of 22,000 passengers (HIE, 2025). Caledonian MacBrayne (or Calmac) is the major operator of passenger and vehicle ferries to the west coast of Scotland, serving ports on the mainland and 22 of the major islands. A total of 3 routes serve the Isle of Lewis/*Eilean Leòdhais* and Harris/*Na Hearadh*:

- Ullapool/*Ulapul* (Wester Ross) - Stornoway/*Steòrnabhagh* (the Isle of Lewis/*Eilean Leòdhais*);
- Uig/*Ùige* (Skye/*An t-Eilean Sgitheanach*) – Tarbert/*An Tairbeart* (Harris/*Na Hearadh*);
- Berneray/*Beàrnaraigh na Hearadh* (North Uist/*Uibhist a Tuath*) – Leverburgh/*An t-Òb* (Harris/*Na Hearadh*).

- 20.6.1.22 The main Ullapool/*Ulapul* – Stornoway/*Steòrnabhagh* route has an average vessel density of >100 routes per km² per month (2019 - 2025) (**Plate 20-3**). This route is usually served by the MV Loch Seaforth ferry, acts as a *'lifeline service, supporting almost all the trade, commuting and personal travel to and from the islands off Scotland's west coast'* and it is *'intertwined with all aspects of island life'* (Cebr, 2022). The MV Loch Seaforth has capacity for 700 passengers, and 376 lane meters of capacity for vehicle traffic. It runs an average of 5 crossings per day during the summer months between March - October (2 return passenger services and a dedicated overnight freight service). Under normal operating conditions the MV Loch Seaforth completes the Stornoway/*Steòrnabhagh* to Ullapool/*Ulapul* journey in around 2 hours and 40 minutes.
- 20.6.1.23 Other more minor commercial passenger vessel routes, with vessel densities of around 2 routes per km² per month (2019 - 2025), are located west of the Isle of Lewis/*Eilean Leòdhais* run from Breasclete/*Brèascleit*, Kirkibost/*Eilean Chirceaboist* and Bernera/*Beàrnaraigh* in Loch Roag/*Loch Ròg* and travel along the northwest coast of the Isle of Lewis/*Eilean Leòdhais*, generally along the north and south boundaries of the Array Area (Marine Scotland, 2025) (**Plate 20-3**). Several low density passenger vessel routes also run between Stornoway/*Steòrnabhagh* and St Kilda/*Hiort*; these routes are primarily located north of the Array Area and have an average vessel density of 2-5 routes per km² per month (2019-2025) (Marine Scotland, 2025) (**Plate 20-3**).
- 20.6.1.24 The majority of personal pleasure craft operate out of Miavaig/*Mìobhaig* in the southwest of Loch Roag/*Loch Ròg*, as well as Stornoway/*Steòrnabhagh* (Marine Scotland, 2025) (**Plate 20-4**). Average annual recreational vessel density reaches up to >100 routes per km² per month (2017-2023) at Miavaig/*Mìobhaig* and Stornoway/*Steòrnabhagh* ports, however decreases to around 0.5-2 routes per km² per month in the wider vicinity of these ports (**Plate 20-4**). Sailing activity is also high around Stornoway/*Steòrnabhagh* with some sailing activity also present around the islands of Loch Roag/*Loch Ròg* and inshore waters south of the Array Area (Marine Scotland, 2025), but in general recreational vessel activity is not observed within the Offshore Project Boundary (**Plate 20-4**).
- 20.6.1.25 This generally aligns with vessel traffic surveys, which recorded a higher prevalence of recreational and passenger vessels in the summer compared to the winter period. Marine traffic is presented in further detail in **Chapter 16, Volume 2a**.
- 20.6.1.26 Boat trips and sea tours from the Isle of Lewis/*Eilean Leòdhais* to St Kilda/*Hiort*, the Flannans/*Na h-Eileanan Flannach* and the Shiant Islands/*Na h-Eileanan Seunta* are popular tourist activities (Visit Outer Hebrides, 2025). Sea Harris runs boat trips to Hirta/*Hiort*, the largest island of the St Kilda/*Hiort* archipelago, from Leverburgh Harris Ferry Terminal (Sea Harris, 2025). Sea Harris also offer private charter trips to St Kilda/*Hiort*, Shiant Islands/*Na h-Eileanan Seunta*, Pabbay/*Pabaigh*, Ensay/*Easaigh*, Killegray/*Ceileagraigh*, Taransay/*Tarasaigh*, Scarp/*An Sgarp*, the Monarch Isles, Flannan islands/*Na h-Eileanan Flannach*, North Rona/*Rònaigh* and other islands in the Outer Hebrides/*Na h-Eileanan Siar*. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, Sea Harris also ran RIB trips on their small vessel Pabbay/*Pabaigh* to Shiant Islands/*Na h-Eileanan Seunta* and other closer islands. However,

due to the effects of the pandemic on small businesses, Sea Harris have ceased operation of the Pabbay/*Pabaigh* vessel.

- 20.6.1.27 Seatrek is another boat operator which offers trips around the Uig/*Ùige* coastline, the island of Loch Roag/*Loch Ròg*, Isle of Lewis/*Eilean Leòdhais* and the Outer Hebrides/*Na h-Eileanan Siar*, as far as Scarp/*An Sgarp*, the Flannan Isles/*Na h-Eileanan Flannach* and North Rona/*Rònaigh* (Visit Outer Hebrides, 2025). Seatrek are based in Miavaig/*Miobhaig* and run tours throughout the summer which travel through Loch Roag/*Loch Ròg* to Sea Stacks and Pabbay/*Pabaigh* from the Miavaig/*Miobhaig* Pier (Seatrek, 2025). Seatrek have previously assisted on surveys for the Project and are therefore already in communications with the Project. Also located at Miavaig/*Miobhaig* are Island Cruising and Loch Roag/*Loch Ròg* Sea Tours who both use the MV Cuma vessel for their tours. Island Cruising offer trips to St Kilda/*Hiort*, stopping off at Scarp/*An Sgarp*, Taransay/*Tarasaigh*, Monach Isles/*Eilean Heisgeir* and the Flannan Isles/*Na h-Eileanan Flannach* en route (Island Cruising, 2025), whilst Loch Roag/*Loch Ròg* Sea Tours offer trips around Loch Roag/*Loch Ròg* (Loch Roag Sea Tours, 2025).
- 20.6.1.28 Within Loch Roag/*Loch Ròg* on the island of Bernera/*Beàrnaraigh*, Islands of Adventure are the only boat trip operator available (Islands of Adventure, 2025). Their tour includes a trip around the island of Bernera/*Beàrnaraigh* including a visit to the Lobster Pond, Norse Mill, caves at Campay Island, Stacks at Berasay Island, and the Old Hill. Island of Adventure operate from Kirkibost/*Eilean Chirceaboist* Pier on the south of Bernera/*Beàrnaraigh* (Visit Outer Hebrides, 2025).
- 20.6.1.29 Most of these destinations are southwest of the Offshore Project and further out into the Atlantic, such as St Kilda/*Hiort* and the Flannan/*Na h-Eileanan Flannach*; therefore, boat tours will have minimal interactions with the Offshore Project. Visits to the Shiant Islands/*Na h-Eileanan Seunta*, on the east of the Isle of Lewis/*Eilean Leòdhais*/*Eilean Leòdhais*, and North Rona/*Rònaigh*, north of the Butt of Lewis/*Eilean Leòdhais*, would require boat tours to travel along the northwest coast of The Isle of Lewis/*Eilean Leòdhais*/*Eilean Leòdhais* through the Offshore Cable Area of Search, but is unlikely to intersect the Array Area.

Plate 20-3 Average monthly total density of passenger vessel routes 2019-2025 (EMODnet, 2025), key Scottish ferry routes (Scottish Government, 2025) and ports and harbours in relation to the Other Sea Users and Recreation Study Area

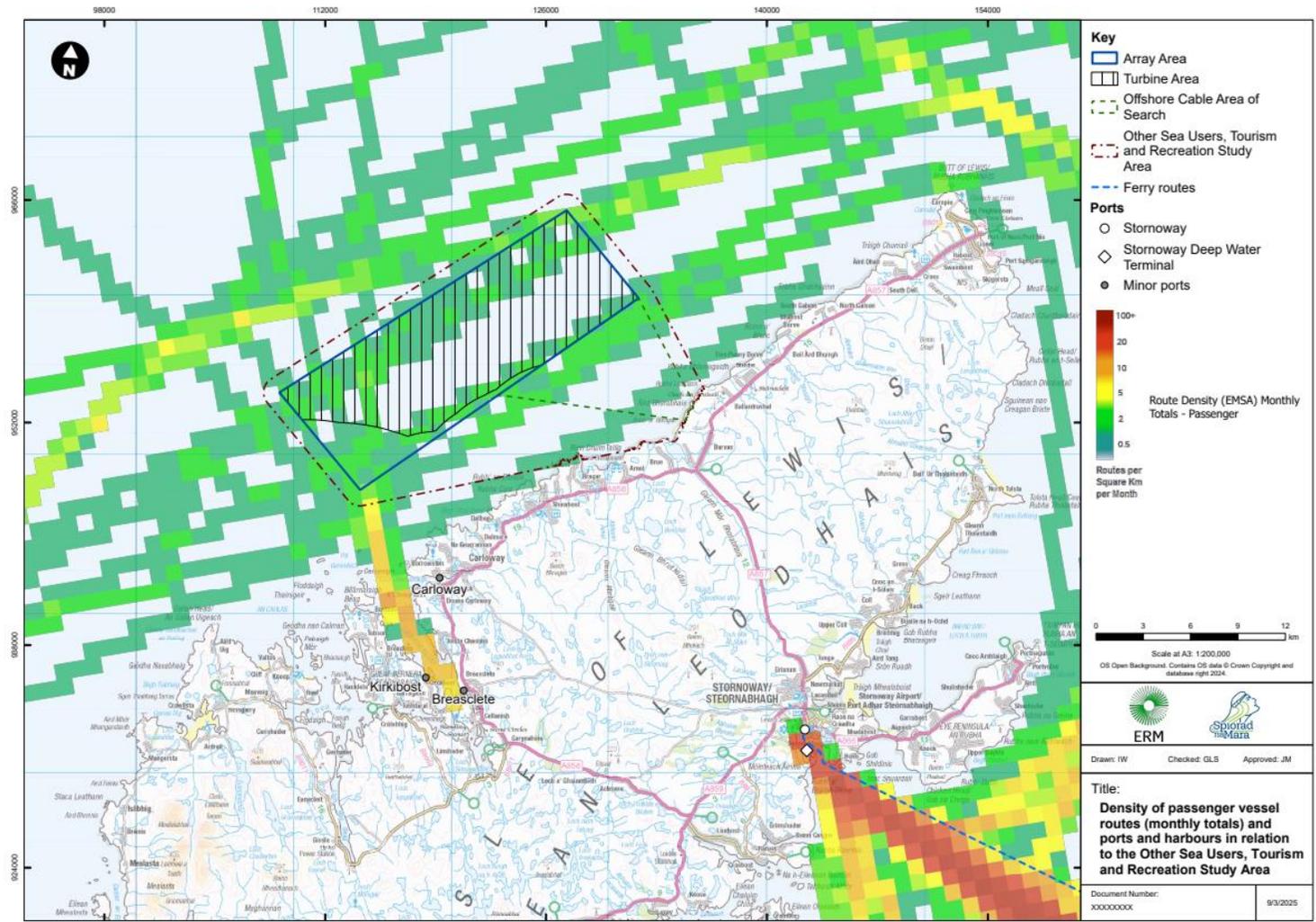
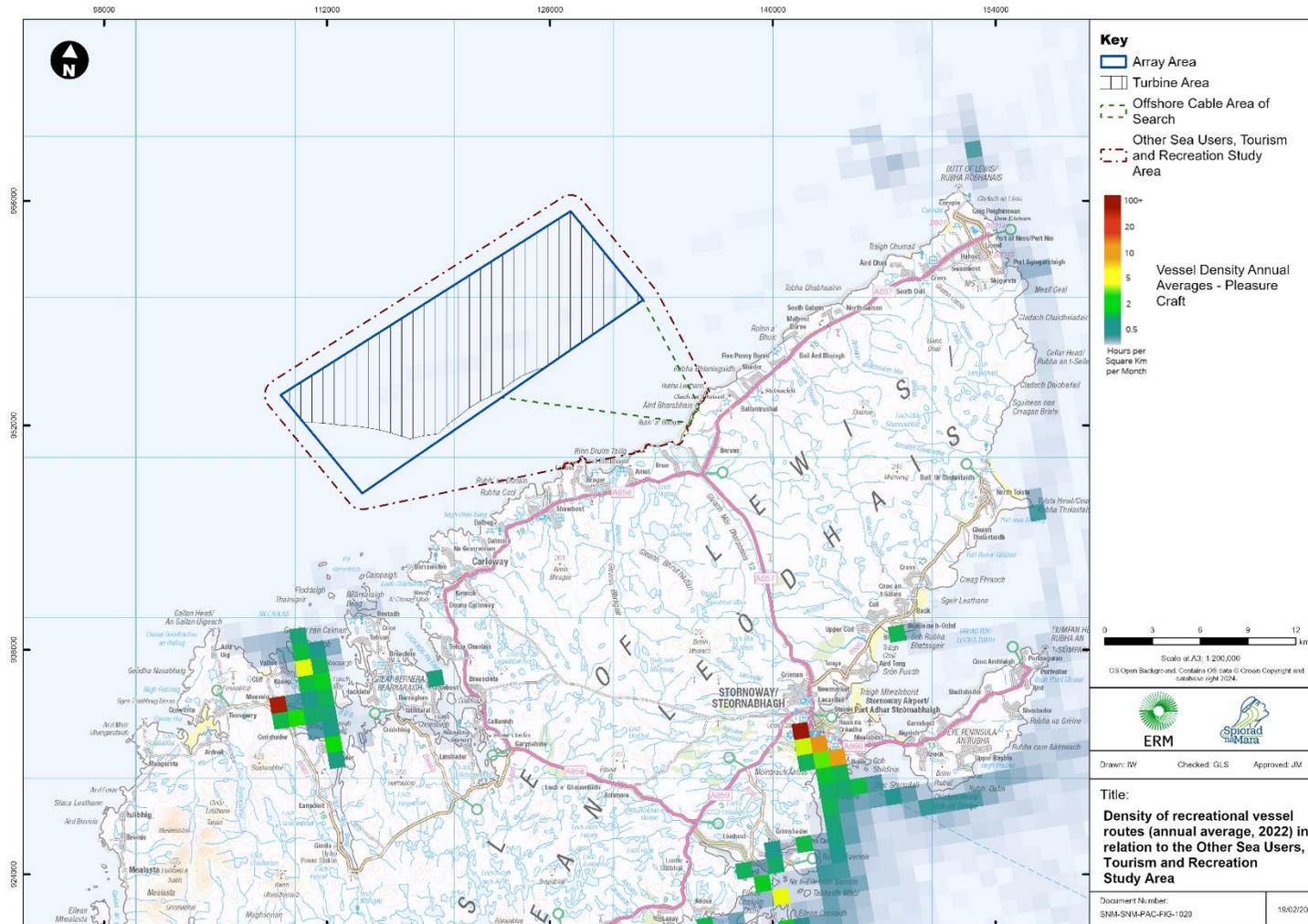


Plate 20-4 Annual average density of recreational vessel 2017-2023 (EMODnet, 2023) for Other Sea Users and Recreation



Tourism

- 20.6.1.30 Tourism is a major contributor to the economy of the Isle of Lewis/*Eilean Leòdhais* and the wider Western Isles/*Na h-Eileanan Siar*. The Outer Hebrides Visitor Survey, commissioned by CnES in partnership with Visit Scotland, found that there were approximately 219,000 visitors to the Western Isles/*Na h-Eileanan Siar* in 2017, adding £65m to the economy, which amounts to approximately 10-15% of the overall economic activity on the islands (Visits Scotland, 2017). Tourism directly supports the equivalent of over 1,000 full-time jobs on the islands and retailers and restaurants in Stornoway/*Steòrnabhagh* obtain up to 40% of their sales from visitors.
- 20.6.1.31 The recovery of tourism since the pandemic was highlighted as an area in need of coordinated support, however it was also noted that the post-pandemic rural economy should not only focus on tourism but ensure greater economic diversity, including a focus on sectors that have less seasonal variation (Currie et al., 2021). Since the pandemic, there have been changes associated with the increase in cruise ship tourism due to construction of the new Stornoway Deep Water Terminal, which adds a new tourist demographic and one-day visitors to the tourism industry.
- 20.6.1.32 In relation to visitor accommodation, the 2023 Visitor Survey reported that about a quarter (24%) of Western Isles/*Na h-Eileanan Siar* tourists stayed in a hotel, others opted for self-catering facilities (34%) or a bed and breakfast (22%) (Visit Scotland, 2023). Hotel accommodation on the Isle of Lewis/*Eilean Leòdhais* is concentrated in Stornoway/*Steòrnabhagh*, with further hotels at Borve/*Borgh*, Balallan/*Baile Ailein* and Carloway/*Càrlabhadh*. Camping and caravanning also accounted for 31% of accommodation used by visitors to the Outer Hebrides/*Na h-Eileanan Siar*. Many beaches on the Isle of Lewis/*Eilean Leòdhais* and Harris have neighbouring designated campsites for campervan parking, with facilities such as toilets available.
- 20.6.1.33 This chapter assesses the impact on tourism and recreation from the construction, O&M, and decommissioning phases of the Offshore Project, including effects for tourism and recreation receptors located onshore arising from changes in amenity associated with noise and visual impacts from construction and O&M activities. Tourism attractions that are within the ZTV for the Array Area are shown in **Plate 20-1**, and include the following which are located on the west coast of the Isle of Lewis/*Eilean Leòdhais*:
- Arnol/*Àrnoil* Blackhouse;
 - Trushal Standing Stone/*Clach an Trushal*;
 - Norse Mill and Kiln;
 - Gearranan/*Na Gearrannan* Blackhouse Village;
 - Dun Carloway/*Càrlabhadh* Broch;
 - Calanais/*Clachan Chalanais* Standing Stones.
- 20.6.1.34 Visual impacts from the Offshore Project to cultural setting are assessed in **Chapter 15, Volume 2a** and **Chapter 18, Volume 2a** and further baseline information regarding socio-economics and

culture is also provided in **Appendix A6.1: Socio-economic Impact Assessment Baseline Volume 2c.**

Recreational activities

- 20.6.1.35 As detailed in the above section, tourism is a key contributor to the local economy of the Western Isles/*Na h-Eileanan Siar*, which the recreational sector supports through outdoor activities and leisure, providing employment, supporting local businesses and mental well-being of both tourists and locals.
- 20.6.1.36 Caring, leisure and other service occupations account for 9.6% of the total occupations on the Isle of Lewis/*Eilean Leòdhais* and Harris, in line with this occupational level across the Western Isles/*Na h-Eileanan Siar* (NRS, 2024). In contrast, the arts, entertainment and recreation sector on the Isle of Lewis/*Eilean Leòdhais* and Harris accounts for 3.2% of the occupations compared to 1.9% for the Western Isles/*Na h-Eileanan Siar* (NRS, 2024), highlighting the importance of this sector to the local economy.

Beaches and scenery

- 20.6.1.37 Beaches and coastal scenery are one of the main attractions for tourists to the Isle of Lewis/*Eilean Leòdhais* and the Western Isles/*Na h-Eileanan Siar*. Scottish Natural Heritage argues that the importance of the Isle of Lewis's coastal character acts as a base for all other tourist activities on the island: "*The 'tourism product' for the islands cannot be considered in isolation from this landscape*" (Taylor *et al.*, 2010). The biodiversity associated with the machair habitat is also one of the reasons why visitors choose to visit the Western Isles/*Na h-Eileanan Siar*. Some of the top reasons selected for visiting the Outer Hebrides/*Na h-Eileanan Siar* within the 2023 Visitor Survey included scenery and landscape (86%) and outdoors activities (43%), such as sea sports, coastal rambling and wildlife watching (Visit Scotland, 2023). Marine wildlife that can be spotted around the Isle of Lewis/*Eilean Leòdhais* includes (but is not limited to), white-tailed eagle *Haliaeetus albicilla*, otter *Lutra lutra*, grey seal *Halichoerus grypus* and common seal *Phoca vitulina*, dolphins *Delphinidae*, harbour porpoise *Phocoena phocoena*, minke whale *Balaenoptera acutorostrata*, and a variety of seabirds and waders.
- 20.6.1.38 The refined Turbine Area is located 11 km from the South Lewis, Harris and North Uist National Scenic Area/*Siorrachd Leòdhais a Deas, na Hearadh agus Uibhist a Tuath*. This area is designated for the stark contrast between the subdued topography covering most of the Isle of Lewis/*Eilean Leòdhais* compared to the rugged hills found in South Lewis and Harris/*Leòdhas agus Na Hearadh* which have some of the highest peaks in the Outer Hebrides/*Na h-Eileanan Siar* (Nature Scot, 1978). Contrasting lowland and coastal landscapes are also found around the rugged hills of South Lewis and Harris/*Leòdhas agus Na Hearadh*, including knock-and-lochan, rocky indented coast, and sandy machair beaches constrained between rocky headlands which add to the diversified landscape of this National Scenic Area (NSA) (Nature Scot, 1978).

- 20.6.1.39 Some of the favourite beaches for tourists along the west coast include Dalmore/*Dail mhòr*, Dalbeg/*Dail Beag*, Bosta/*Bostadh*, Eoropie/*Eòrapaidh*, Loch na Muilne Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) reserve and Shawbost/*Siabost* for walking and other recreational activities including sea sports. Many of these beaches also have neighbouring designated campsites for campervan parking, with facilities such as toilets available.
- 20.6.1.40 The closest beaches in relation to the Offshore Cable Area of Search are located at Barvas/*Barabhias* or *Barbhas* and Bru/*Brù*, approximately 500 m south, Arnol/*Àrnoil* beach, around 1.5 km south and Shawbost/*Siabost* beach, around 2.3 km south. Arnol/*Àrnoil*, Shawbost/*Siabost* and Dalmore/*Dail mhòr* beaches as well as Loch na Muilne RSPB reserve also host viewpoints off the northwestern coast of the Isle of Lewis/*Eilean Leòdhais* from the coastal paths, as well as the Stac a'Phris Arch viewpoint which is located between Dalmore/*Dail mhòr* and Shawbost/*Siabost*.
- 20.6.1.41 Further baseline information relating to visual impacts is provided in **Chapter 18, Volume 2a** and baseline information relating to cultural setting is provided in **Chapter 15, Volume 2a**.
- Reactional sea angling*
- 20.6.1.42 Commercial fishing (defined as fishing activity legally undertaken where the catch is sold for taxable profit) is described and assessed in **Chapter 21, Volume 2a**.
- 20.6.1.43 Many recreational sea anglers (defined as sea fishing primarily using rod and line or hand-held line where the purpose is recreation and not for the sale or trade of the catch), keep a boat for recreational fishing or small-scale subsistence fishing, and the catch is often shared with neighbours or friends. Recreational sea angling by private or charter boats are highest around areas like Cliff/*Cliobh*, Carloway/*Càrlabhagh* and Shawbost/*Siabost* along the western coast of the Isle of Lewis/*Eilean Leòdhais* (Marine Scotland, 2015).
- 20.6.1.44 In the Isle of Lewis/*Eilean Leòdhais*, a number of the coastal communities such as Great Bernera/*Beàrnaraigh* are still fishing communities where there is continued but fragile transmission of traditional knowledge through continued intergenerational fishing activity, carried out either on a small scale or recreationally. Fishing is highly present in cultural memory, preserved through stories and songs. There is a vast body of knowledge relating to the seabed, sea conditions, fish habitats held by fishers. In addition, those who fish hold knowledge relating to safety and navigation, such as intricate coastal mental maps and knowledge of sea marks, and as such the relationship between coastal communities and the sea forms a significant part of cultural identity of the Isle of Lewis/*Eilean Leòdhais* and of the Western Isles/*Na h-Eileanan Siar* as a whole.
- 20.6.1.45 Recreational angling for migratory Atlantic salmon *Salmo salar* and brown trout *Salmo trutta* within the many rivers and lochs is also popular on the Isle of Lewis/*Eilean Leòdhais*, with the Isle of Lewis/*Eilean Leòdhais* holding the world record for the most Atlantic salmon hooked on a rod in one day. These species can be found in the main river systems which include the Grimersta/*Griomasaigh* system, the Creed, Blackwater/*An t-Alltan Dubh*, Fhorsta, Laxay/*Lacasdal*

and Gress/Griais. The Barvas/*Barabhas* or *Barbhas* (owned by the Barvas Estate as detailed above), Arnol/*Àrnoil*, and Garrynahine/*Gearraidh na h-Aibhne* river systems are also known to host good numbers of salmon and sea trout each year. The Barvas/*Barabhas* or *Barbhas* and Arnol/*Àrnoil* rivers located on the Isle of Lewis/*Eilean Leòdhais* are also key spawning grounds for Atlantic salmon, which have recently been added to the endangered species list (IUCN, 2023). The mouth of these rivers are approximately 1 km south of the Offshore Cable Area of Search.

- 20.6.1.46 The Carloway/*Càrlabhadh* river system is community owned and has high numbers of migratory salmon and sea trout. Some of the closest freshwater angling clubs to the Offshore Project on the Isle of Lewis/*Eilean Leòdhais* include the Carloway Angling Club, approximately 6 km from the Barvas Estate at Carloway/*Càrlabhadh* in Loch Roag/*Loch Ròg* and the Stornoway Angling Association, based in Stornoway/*Steòrnabhagh*.
- 20.6.1.47 As river and loch angling occurs onshore and is located outside of the Study Area, it is considered that there is no pathway of effect from the Offshore Project on river and loch angling. As such, river and loch angling is not considered further. Only recreational sea angling is considered in this chapter.
- 20.6.1.48 Recreational sea anglers target sea trout *Salmo trutta trutta*, pollack *Pollachius pollachius* and mackerel *Scomber scombrus* and to a lesser extent also target common ling *Molva molva*, haddock *Melanogrammus aeglefinus* and Atlantic cod *Gadus morhua*. Sea trout are present between June-October whilst the peak season for pollack and mackerel angling is during June-September. Several charter vessels offer recreational sea angling trips offshore or sea angling can be undertaken around the Lewis coastline. Some popular locations along the west coast of the Isle of Lewis/*Eilean Leòdhais* for shore angling include Ardrol Beach and Bostadh Beach, both of which are located in Loch Roag/*Loch Ròg* outside of the Study Area.
- 20.6.1.49 Recreational sea angling boats as well as the Stornoway Sea Angling Club are highlighted to fish within the Offshore Project Boundary during the summer and autumn months. During these months, the Stornoway Sea Angling Club fishes within the Offshore Project Boundary weekly with up to 10 - 12 paying anglers onboard (Scoping Opinion; MD-LOT, 2024).
- 20.6.1.50 Recreational sea angling for Atlantic bluefin tuna is also offered around the Western Isles/*Na h-Eileanan Siar*. These excursions are generally offered as part of the wider Scottish scientific Bluefin Tuna catch/tag/release programme but offer a unique experience to catch a key predator species whilst contributing to scientific research. Isle of Harris Sea Tours offers bluefin tuna fishing trips from Leverburgh port/*An t-Òb* on Harris, south of the Isle of Lewis/*Eilean Leòdhais* (Isles of Harris Sea Tours, 2025). Fishing for bluefin tuna is closely regulated, with licences required for commercial bluefin tuna fishing and permits for recreational fishers for catch and release (MMO, 2024). Currently, only one vessel on Harris has been granted a commercial fishing licence for bluefin tuna. Landings of bluefin tuna are also closely monitored and accidental bycatch must also be landed into a designated port, of which Stornoway/*Steòrnabhagh* is the only designated port on the Isle of

Lewis/*Eilean Leòdhais* (MMO, 2024). Bluefin tuna predate on shoals of mackerel off the coast of the Outer Hebrides/*Na h-Eileanan Siar* and have also been recorded within Loch Roag/*Loch Ròg*.

Surfing

20.6.1.51 The Isle of Lewis/*Eilean Leòdhais* and the Western Isles/*Na h-Eileanan Siar* are recognised as some of the best surfing conditions in Europe due to powerful waves from the Atlantic Ocean (Visit Outer Hebrides, 2025). The majority of surf spots are located on the west coast which 2 surf schools regularly visit.

20.6.1.52 The Western Isles/*Na h-Eileanan Siar* are exposed to swell waves generated in the Atlantic Ocean (SAS, 2009). Swell waves offer high quality surfing locations along the west and north facing beaches of the Western Isles, including around the Harris and Lewis/*Leodhas agus na Hearadh* coastline, and are the preferred wave type for surfers. However, the remote location of the Western Isles/*Na h-Eileanan Siar* means that many of these high quality surfing beaches remain uncrowded for much of the year. Some of the most popular beaches and surfing spots around the Isle of Lewis/*Eilean Leòdhais* include:

- Eoropie/*Eòrapaidh* beach – the most north westerly break on the island and one of the most popular surfing spots on the Isle of Lewis/*Eilean Leòdhais*, approximately 20 km from the Offshore Cable Area of Search;
- Barvas/*Barabhas or Barbhas or Barbhas* and Bru/*Brù* – exposed boulder reefs on the north west of the Isle of Lewis/*Eilean Leòdhais* along the edge of Loch Mor Bharabhas, approximately 500 m from the Offshore Cable Area of Search;
- Dalmore/*Dail mhòr* and Cliff/*Cliobh* – 2 sheltered beaches on the western coast of the Isle of Lewis/*Eilean Leòdhais*, approximately 15 km and 30 km respectively from the Offshore Cable Area of Search;
- Mangersta/*Mangarstadh* – an exposed beach on the western coast of the Isle of Lewis/*Eilean Leòdhais*, approximately 40 km from the Offshore Cable Area of Search.

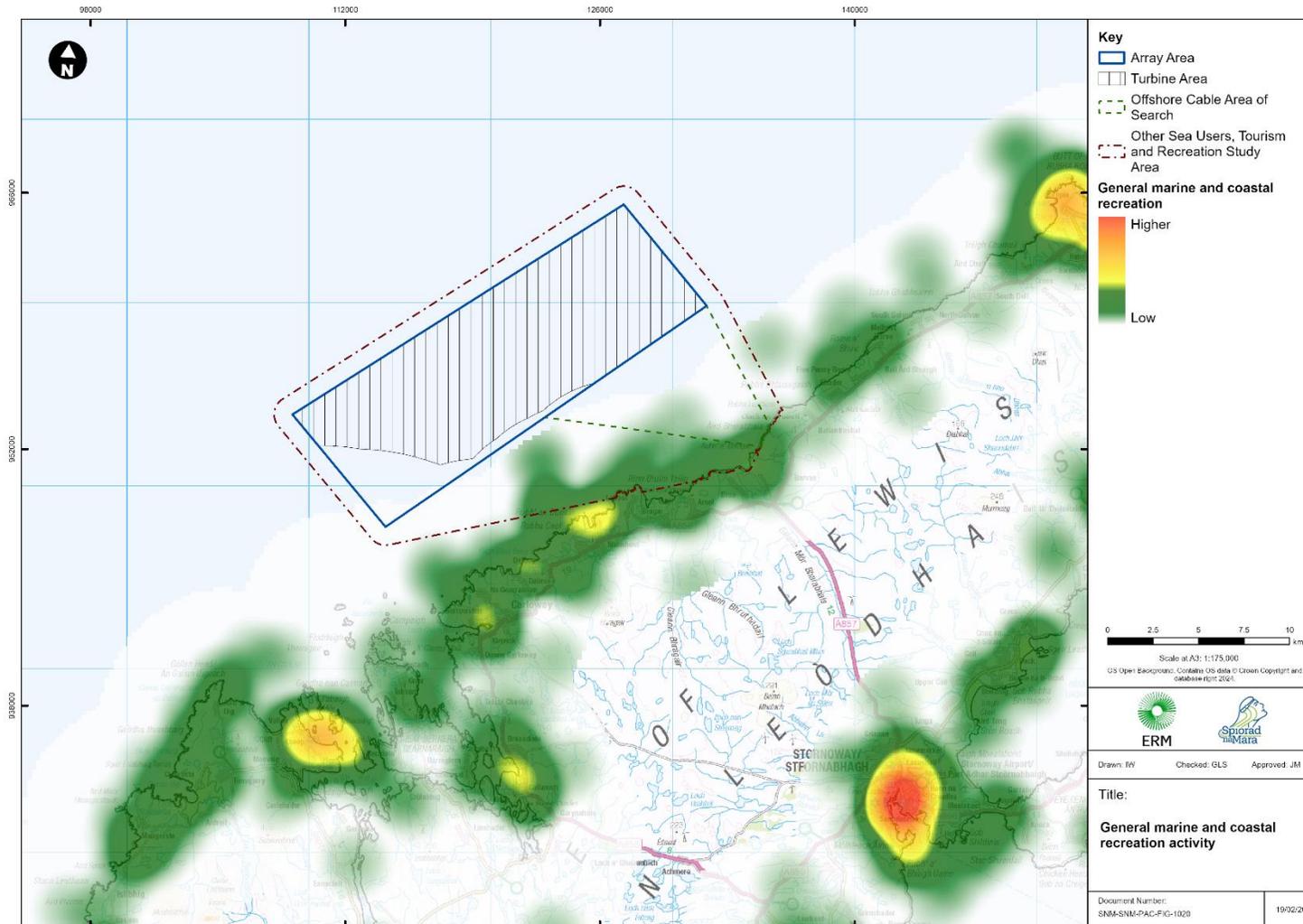
20.6.1.53 The most frequented area to surf on the island is along the west coast, particularly between Ballantrushal/*Baile an Truiseil* and Carloway/*Càrlabhagh* (Marine Scotland, 2025). Strava heat mapping also shows concentrations of surfing activity at Barvas/*Barabhas or Barbhas or Barbhas* and Dalmore/*Dail mhòr* beaches, and to a lesser extent at Labost/*Àirigh nan Crodh* also (Strava, 2025). Rubh a Bhiogar, another surfing spot, is located just north of Barvas/*Barabhas or Barbhas*.

20.6.1.54 Varying bathymetric and morphological conditions cause waves to break. In surfing, there are four recognised categories of “breaker types”: beach breaks, reef breaks, point (or headland) breaks, and river mouth/estuarine delta breaks (SAS, 2009). Barvas/*Barabhas or Barbhas or Barbhas* and Bru/*Brù* represent reef breaks, characterised by boulders and rocky seabed (Surf Forecast, 2026). Rubh a Bhiogar, like the majority of surfing locations across the Isle of Lewis/*Eilean Leòdhais*, is categorised as a point break (i.e., conditions for wave break are caused by the presence of a local headland) (Surf Forecast, 2026).

Others (open water swimming, scuba diving, sailing, snorkelling, wind and kitesurfing, kayaking, canoeing paddle boarding etc.)

- 20.6.1.55 General marine and costal recreational activity on the Isle of Lewis/*Eilean Leòdhais* is highest around Stornoway/*Steòrnabhagh* and along the southeast coast, as well as along the northwest coast and around the eastern ports of Loch Roag/*Loch Ròg*, like Carloway/*Càrlabhadh*, Breasclete/*Brèascleit*, and Bernera/*Beàrnaraigh* (Marine Scotland, 2015) (**Plate 20-5**). Most coastal recreation occurs within 5 km of the coastline.
- 20.6.1.56 Swimming in open water, known as wild swimming, is a popular activity at beaches and lochs, and a number of informal swimming groups meet regularly and organise swims in local areas such as Uig/*Ùige* and Shawbost/*Siabost*. Larger organised swimming groups like Immerse Hebrides and Salt Box Sauna are also based in Stornoway/*Steòrnabhagh* (Immerse Hebrides Ltd., 2025). Strava heat mapping shows open water swimming to occur off the beach of Kneep/*Cnìp* (Strava, 2025). Guided open water swimming and snorkelling trips are offered from Stornoway/*Steòrnabhagh* around the Isle of Lewis/*Eilean Leòdhais*.
- 20.6.1.57 Other sea sports such as surfing (detailed above), paddleboarding, canoeing and sea kayaking are also popular among locals as well as visitors, with the majority of key water sporting areas located on the west coast, at Barvas/*Barabhas* or *Barbhas* or *Barbhas*, Labost/*Àirigh nan Crodh*, between Ness/*Nis* and Dalmore/*Dail mhòr*, and around Cliff/*Cliobh*, Kneep/*Cnìp* and Mangersta/*Mangarstadh* in Uig/*Ùige* (Marine Scotland, 2015) (Strava, 2025). The most frequented area to surf, sea kayak or paddleboard on the island is along the west coast, particularly between Ballantrushal/*Baile an Truiseil* and Carloway/*Càrlabhadh* (Marine Scotland, 2015).
- 20.6.1.58 Several scuba diving spots are also located within Loch Roag/*Loch Ròg*, the Flannan Isles/*Na h-Eileanan Flannach* and Stornoway/*Steòrnabhagh* (Marine Scotland, 2015), with the main Lewis and Harris Sub Aqua Club based in Stornoway/*Steòrnabhagh*. A number of coastal rowing groups also operate along the west coast of the Isle of Lewis/*Eilean Leòdhais*, including West Side Rowers at Arnol/*Àrnoil*, RowFlo at Carloway/*Càrlabhadh* and An Eathar at Shawbost/*Siabost* (Scottish Coastal Rowing, 2022).
- 20.6.1.59 Sports facilities and teams on the Isle of Lewis/*Eilean Leòdhais* are listed in Section 5.1.5 Community Services and Facilities of **Appendix 6.1: Detailed Social and Economic Baseline, Volume 2c**.

Plate 20-5 General marine and coastal recreation activity (Marine Scotland, 2025) for Other Sea Users and Recreation



Core paths and other rights of way

20.6.1.60 As noted above, this chapter assesses amenity effects from the Offshore Project on both offshore and onshore tourism and recreation receptors during construction, O&M, and decommissioning of the Offshore Project. Onshore receptors like core paths and rights of way that are within the ZTV as shown in **Plate 20-1**, and are therefore susceptible to amenity effects from the Offshore Project.

20.6.2 FUTURE BASELINE

20.6.2.1 No hydrocarbon fields, petroleum licensing rounds or carbon storage licensing rounds are located within the Study Area (NSTA, 2025). Therefore, future oil and gas activities are not anticipated to occur within the Project lifetime.

20.6.2.2 No tidal or wave lease sites are identified within the Study Area (Marine Scotland, 2025), therefore future tidal or wave energy developments are also not anticipated to occur within the Project lifetime.

20.6.2.3 The closest ScotWind lease site, N3, is located approximately 28 km from the Array Area. The N3 ScotWind lease site, also known as Talisk, has been won by Magnora Offshore Wind who submitted a Scoping Report in April 2025 which identifies an offshore cable corridor east of the Isle of Lewis/*Eilean Leòdhais* to a landfall area of search around Stornoway/*Steòrnabhagh* (Magnora Offshore Wind, 2025). Magnora Offshore Wind plan to submit the consent application for Talisk in 2027. Talisk (N3) and all other ScotWind lease sites are located beyond the Study Area. No additional offshore wind lease sites are identified.

Increased aquaculture

20.6.2.4 The demand for Scottish salmon from Asian and Oceania markets has increased 62% from 2024 to 2025 (Scottish Salmon, 2025). As demand from these markets continues to increase, the aquaculture sector in Scotland has shown an overall 45% increase in salmon exports since 2024 across Scotland. For the Outer Hebrides/*Na h-Eileanan Siar*, salmon exports have double year on year from £92 million to £187 million in the Western Isles/*Na h-Eileanan Siar* in 2025 (Scottish Salmon, 2025). This trend is expected to continue in future years. In addition to demand from Asian markets, the Norwegian company, Norwegian Mountain Scotland, have also shown interest in establishing a new land-based salmon farm within the Uig/*Ùige* area of the Isle of Lewis/*Eilean Leòdhais*. Plans for this farm have not yet been finalised, however the demand for Scottish Salmon is expected to continue to rise with salmon being the UK's fish of choice and Scottish salmon exports making up 41% of the UK's export seafood to 54 countries (Scottish Salmon, 2025).

20.6.2.5 Bakkafrost Scotland are also planning to consolidate their existing salmon farms around South Lewis and Harris/*Leòdhas agus Na Hearadh*, several of which are located within Loch Roag/*Loch Ròg*, with the aim to increase salmon production by focussing on fewer larger sites. If secured,

these proposed developments could see production moved to deeper water and to within higher energy locations to increase future production into 2030.

Increased tourism and recreation

- 20.6.2.6 The tourism industry in the Outer Hebrides/*Na h-Eileanan Siar* is currently growing at around 5% per annum (Visit Outer Hebrides, 2025). The Outer Hebrides/*Na h-Eileanan Siar* tourism strategy aims to continue this growth, diversifying the tourism sector and extending the tourism season to create demand within the autumn and winter months (Outer Hebrides Tourism, 2021). So far, the tourism season has been extended from 3-4 months around 20 years ago to 7-8 months today, with the peak months for tourism being April-October, helping to support a more stable local economy. Changes to the tourism industry take a long time to work through business and make impacts to tourism trends, therefore future changes to this industry are expected to be slow, long-term changes.
- 20.6.2.7 Two-thirds of visitors to the Outer Hebrides/*Na h-Eileanan Siar* are regular visitors to the islands (Visit Outer Hebrides, 2025). Over 80% of the visitors are from the UK, with the majority coming from other parts of Scotland. Since the pandemic, short breaks and UK get aways have also become more popular, particularly during the off-peak season. More travellers are also looking for more authentic cultural experiences, sustainable travel options and connection to outdoor activities, with 73% of people willing to spend 10% or more for local experiences, nature and outdoor activities (Visit Scotland, 2024). With the top 3 reasons to visit the Outer Hebrides/*Na h-Eileanan Siar* being the scenery and landscape (86%), history and culture (56%) and outdoor activities (43%) (Visit Scotland, 2023) the Outer Hebrides/*Na h-Eileanan Siar* is expected to remain a popular destination among tourists.
- 20.6.2.8 Much of the Isle of Lewis/*Eilean Leòdhais* is reliant on tourism to support local businesses, outdoor activity centres, small ports and harbours, and local restaurants. Because of this, recreation and leisure sector is also expected to benefit from the continued growth of the tourism industry within the Outer Hebrides/*Na h-Eileanan Siar* and Western Isles/*Na h-Eileanan Siar*. Tourism directly supports the equivalent of over 1,000 full-time jobs on the islands and retailers and restaurants in Stornoway/*Steòrnabhagh* obtain up to 40% of their sales from visitors. The construction of the Stornoway Deep Water Terminal in 2024 is also expected to support the growing cruise market, which has grown by 6.7% between 2017 and 2018, and enable larger cruise ships to bring passengers from across the globe to South Lewis and Harris/*Leòdhas agus Na Hearadh* (HIE, 2025). Construction of the Stornoway Deep Water Terminal has allowed Stornoway Port to accommodate cruise ships with passenger capacities over 3,600; with roughly 88 cruise ships calling at Stornoway Port between April and October, the port continues to hit record passenger arrivals which are projected to be over 60,000 in 2025 (Cruise Scotland, 2025).

20.7 BASIS FOR ENVIRONMENT IMPACT ASSESSMENT

20.7.1 MAXIMUM DESIGN SCENARIO

20.7.1.1 Assessing using a parameter-based design envelope approach means that the assessment considers a maximum design scenario whilst allowing the flexibility to make improvements in the future in ways that cannot be predicted at the time of submission of the consent applications. The assessment of the maximum adverse scenario for each receptor establishes the maximum potential adverse impact and as a result impacts of greater adverse significance would not arise should any other development scenario (as described in **Chapter 3, Volume 1a**) to that assessed within this chapter be taken forward in the final scheme design.

20.7.1.2 The maximum parameters and assessment assumptions that have been identified to be relevant to Other Sea Users and Recreation are outlined in **Table 20-11** and are in line with **Chapter 3, Volume 1a**.

Table 20-11 Maximum parameters and assessment assumptions for impacts on Other Sea Users and Recreation

Project Phase and Activity/Impact	Maximum Design Scenario	Justification
Construction		
Loss of access to aquaculture support vessels due to the presence of installation safety zones and construction activities	<p>Construction programme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Duration is up to 5 years. - Working hours are expected to be 24 hours, 7 days a week. - Offshore construction within the Offshore Project Boundary will only be undertaken during the April-October period, except for offshore Landfall construction works located within the HDD Exit Pit Area. <p>Offshore Project Areas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Offshore Project Boundary: 208 km² - Array Area: 161 km² - Turbine Area: 140 km² - OCAS: 47 km² <p>Energy transmission infrastructure: Scenario 2 (WTGs without OSP)</p> <p>WTGs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Maximum of WTGs: up to 60 - Foundation: Hybrid Gravity Base - Minimum spacing 900 m between WTGs - WTG with up to 4 legged jacket foundations with sea surface dimensions of 35 m x 35 m. <p>Array Cables</p>	<p>Largest possible extent of infrastructure and construction activities, greatest number of simultaneous vessel activities and greatest duration resulting in the maximum spatial and temporal effect on aquaculture support vessels, ports and harbours, boat tour operators, recreation and tourism and recreational sea angling activities.</p>
Increased demand for port services during construction		
Loss of access to boat tour routes and other sea users due to installation safety zones and construction activities		
Loss of access to recreational sea anglers and specific angling tour operators due to the presence of installation safety zones and construction activities		

Project Phase and Activity/Impact	Maximum Design Scenario	Justification
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Scenario 2: the installation of up to x12 Array Cables to final WTG in string (within Array Area) and up to x12 Array Cables to Landfall (within OCAS). - Installation method: 100% surface laid cable with intermittent stabilisation using rock bags, with spacing of 5-15 m, depending on the route. - Cable Length: - Array Cables to final WTG maximum length of 160 km; - Array Cables to Landfall maximum length of 190 km; - Maximum length of Array Cables is therefore 350 km. <p>Vessel Movements and Anchorage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Up to 35 construction vessels on site simultaneously - Up to 871 vessel movements (return trips) per year - Anchored vessels may be utilised during the installation of the Offshore Cables within the Offshore Project Boundary. <p>Construction working arrangements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Buoyed construction area encompassing the maximum extent of the Turbine Area; - 500 m safety zones around wind farm structure or offshore transmission infrastructure (WTG or OSP) and/or foundations during construction activities; - 50 m safety zones around partially complete structures or complete structures; - 500 m radius advisory exclusion zones around Offshore Project vessels undertaking construction activities; 	

Project Phase and Activity/Impact	Maximum Design Scenario	Justification
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Safety zones and advisory exclusion zones in place throughout construction phase; - All third-party vessels will choose not to navigate within the buoyed construction area based on experience at previously under construction offshore wind farms which are delineated with buoyage. <p>HDD Exit Pit Construction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Scenario 2: installation of up to 13 HDD exit pits (12 plus 1 spare) by rock cutting or grinding; - Exit pit area: 75 m x 5 m = 375 m² 	
Visual and noise effects as a result of offshore construction activities	As per the MDS detailed within Table 18-17 of Chapter 18, Volume 2a and Table 19-21 of Chapter 19, Volume 2a .	Chapter 18, Volume 2a and Chapter 19, Volume 2a present the largest possible extent and size of infrastructure, resulting in the maximum spatial visual and noise effects to amenities and receptors.
Operation and maintenance		
Loss of access to aquaculture support vessels due to the presence of surface piercing infrastructure and O&M activities	<p>Operational and maintenance programme Duration up to 35 years.</p> <p>Offshore Project Areas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Offshore Project Boundary: 208 km² - Array Area: 161 km² - Turbine Area: 140 km² - OCAS: 47 km² <p>Offshore infrastructure</p>	Largest possible extent of infrastructure and construction activities, greatest number of simultaneous vessel activities and greatest duration resulting in the maximum spatial and temporal effect on aquaculture support vessels, ports and harbours boat tour operators, recreation and tourism and recreational sea angling activities.
Increased demand for port services during O&M		
Loss of access to boat tour routes and other sea users due to the		

Project Phase and Activity/Impact	Maximum Design Scenario	Justification
<p>presence of surface piercing infrastructure and O&M activities</p> <p>Loss of access to recreational sea anglers and specific angling tour operators due to the presence of surface piercing infrastructure and O&M activities</p>	<p>Full build out of Scenario 2, consisting of:</p> <p>WTGs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Up to 60 WTGs; - Minimum spacing 900 m between WTGs - WTG with up to 4 legged jacket foundations with sea surface dimensions of 35 m x 35 m. <p>Array Cables:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cable length: 12 Array Cables to Final WTG (within the Turbine Area) and 12 Array Cables to Landfall (within the OCAS) equating to a maximum cable length of 350 km. - Surface lay cables installed with 100% of cables requiring protection. - Cable protection: will be achieved using rock berms, rock bags, concrete mattresses or other inert material and will have a maximum width of 3 m, height of 1.1 m. <p>Operational and maintenance working arrangements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Presence of 500 m safety zones during major maintenance; - 500 m radius advisory exclusion zones around Offshore Project vessels undertaking major maintenance activities. - Assume that commercial vessels will choose not to navigate within the Turbine Area. - Small craft (fishing vessels and recreational vessels may choose to navigate internally within the Turbine Area. <p>Vessel movements</p>	

Project Phase and Activity/Impact	Maximum Design Scenario	Justification
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Up to 10 O&M vessels on site simultaneously; - Up to 32,034 vessel movements (return trips) per year 	
Permanent amenity effects as a result of permanent offshore surface piercing infrastructure	As per the MDS detailed within Table 18-17 of Chapter 18, Volume 2a and Table 19-21 of Chapter 19, Volume 2a .	Chapter 18, Volume 2a and Chapter 19, Volume 2a present the largest possible extent and size of infrastructure, resulting in the maximum spatial visual and noise effects to amenities and receptors.
Changes to hydrodynamic regime due to presence of offshore infrastructure	As per the MDS detailed within Table 9-20 of Chapter 9, Volume 2a .	Chapter 9, Volume 2a presents the largest possible extent and size of infrastructure, resulting in the maximum changes to marine physical and coastal processes and therefore maximum reduction in wave resource and surf quality.
Decommissioning		
Loss of access to aquaculture support vessels due to the presence of safety zones and decommissioning activities	The decommissioning sequence will generally be the reverse of the construction sequence and involve similar types and numbers of vessels and equipment. Activities similar to the construction phase (but in reverse). The assumptions for the construction phase therefore apply.	The scenario which represents the maximum level of infrastructure to be decommissioned.
Increased demand for port services during decommissioning	Following the O&M phase, components of the Offshore Project may be left in-situ to avoid unnecessarily disturbing the seabed (i.e. where marine habitat has formed). This could include scour protection associated with the WTG foundations and sections of the Offshore Cable. The potential for infrastructure to remain in-situ will be confirmed through consultation on	Decommissioning is likely to include removal of all of the WTG components and part of the foundations (those above seabed level) and removal of all other surface infrastructure.
Loss of access to boat tour routes and other sea users due to safety zones and decommissioning activities		

Project Phase and Activity/Impact	Maximum Design Scenario	Justification
Loss of access to recreational sea anglers and specific angling tour operators due to the presence of safety zones and decommissioning activities	<p>the Decommissioning Programme to ensure the most suitable approach is taken.</p> <p>At this stage it is unconfirmed which components (if any) would remain in-situ, however, under the maximum design scenario for loss of access during decommissioning it has been assumed that all infrastructure would be removed.</p>	Construction phase maximum design scenario: Decommissioning activities are expected to occur with a lower intensity than those during construction, as such, construction activities represent a maximum design scenario.
Visual and noise effects as a result of offshore decommissioning activities	As per the MDS detailed within Table 18-17 of Chapter 18, Volume 2a and Table 19-21 of Chapter 19, Volume 2a .	Chapter 18, Volume 2a and Chapter 19, Volume 2a present the scenario for maximum level of infrastructure to be decommissioned, which would result in the maximum spatial visual and noise effects to amenities and receptors.

20.7.2 EMBEDDED MITIGATION MEASURES

- 20.7.2.1 As part of the Project design process, a number of embedded mitigation measures have been adopted to reduce the potential for impacts on Other Sea Users and Recreation and these have evolved over the development process as the EIAR has progressed and in response to consultation.
- 20.7.2.2 The embedded mitigation measures also include those that have been identified as good or standard practice and include actions that would be undertaken to meet existing legislation requirements. As there is a commitment to implementing the embedded mitigation, and also to various standard sectoral practices and procedures, they are considered inherently part of the design of the Project and are set out in this EIAR.
- 20.7.2.3 **Table 20-12** Error! Reference source not found. sets out the relevant embedded mitigation measures within the design and how these affect the Other Sea Users and Recreation assessment.

Table 20-12 Relevant Other Sea Users and Recreation embedded mitigation measures

ID	Environmental Measure Proposed	Project Phase Measure Introduced	How the Environmental Measures will be Secured	Relevance to Assessment
M011	The Offshore Project inclusive of surface piercing structures and subsea cables will be appropriately charted on Admiralty and aeronautical charts, and information on structure positions and heights will be provided to the UK Hydrographic Office (UKHO).	Pre-Construction, construction, O&M, and decommissioning	To be secured through a condition of the Section 36 consent and/or Marine Licence.	Ensure all other sea users, fishermen and vessels are aware of all Project infrastructure
M012	Timely and efficient distribution of Notices to Mariners (NtMs), Kingfisher notifications, and other navigational warnings of the position and nature of works associated with the Offshore Project, inc information for vessel routes, timings and locations, safety zones (around surface piercing infrastructure) and advisory passing distances. Physical notices will be places at marinas and harbours in the vicinity of the Offshore Project and final locations of installed infrastructure will be charted and distributed to recreational clubs.	Pre-Construction, construction, O&M, and decommissioning	Secured in the Section 36 Consent and/or Marine Licence via the requirement for notifications and promulgation of information and will be set out within the NSVMP.	Ensure all other sea users are notified of works relating to the Project and information is made available for local recreational clubs in public spaces
M013	Surface piercing structures - application for safety zones of up to 500 m during construction and periods of major	Pre-Construction, construction, O&M, and decommissioning	To be secured through a condition of the Section 36 consent and/or Marine Licence.	Reduce risk to navigational safety

ID	Environmental Measure Proposed	Project Phase Measure Introduced	How the Environmental Measures will be Secured	Relevance to Assessment
	maintenance, and up to 50 m pre-commissioning.			
M014	Marking and lighting of the Array Area in agreement with Northern Lighthouse Board (NLB) and as per the requirements of International Association of Lighthouse Authorities (IALA) Recommendation O-139 (IALA, 2021a) and Guidance G1162 (IALA, 2021b). This will include a buoyed construction area.	Pre-Construction, construction, O&M, and decommissioning	To be secured through a condition of the Section 36 consent and/or Marine Licence.	Reduce risk to navigational safety
M015	Compliance of all Offshore Project vessels with international marine regulations as adopted by the Flag State, notably the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea (COLREGs) (IMO, 1972/1977) and the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) (IMO, 1974).	Pre-construction, construction, O&M, and decommissioning	To be secured through a condition of the Section 36 consent and/or Marine Licence.	Reduce risk to navigational safety
M016	Wind turbines blade clearance of at least 28.33 m above Mean High Water Springs (MHWS) (30 m above Mean Sea Level (MSL)).	Design, pre-construction, construction, O&M	To be secured through a condition of the Section 36 consent and/or Marine Licence.	To ensure sufficient clearance for recreational and other sea user vessels to pass safely.
M019	A final Offshore Environmental Management Plan (OEMP) will be developed prior to commencement of construction (building on Outline Offshore EMP, Volume 3) in compliance with legislative requirements	Pre-construction and construction	Secured in the Section 36 Consent and/or Marine Licence via the condition for an OEMP to be	Reduce risk of adverse environmental effects on Other Sea Users and Recreation

ID	Environmental Measure Proposed	Project Phase Measure Introduced	How the Environmental Measures will be Secured	Relevance to Assessment
	and/or best practice standards and guidance and adhered to.		submitted to MD-LOT for approval.	
M020	A Decommissioning Plan will be developed prior to the construction of the Project in compliance with legislative requirements and/or best practice standards and guidance and adhered to.	Decommissioning	Secured in the Section 36 Consent and/or Marine Licence via the condition for a Decommissioning Plan to be submitted to MD-LOT for approval and the Energy Act 2004	Reduce risk of adverse effects to Other Sea Users and Recreation
M025	A final O&M Plan (building on Outline Operational & Maintenance Plan, Volume 3) will be developed in compliance with legislative requirements and/or best practice standards and guidance prior to the operation of the Project and adhered to.	O&M	Secured in the Section 36 Consent and/or Marine Licence via the condition for an EMP to be submitted to MD-LOT for approval.	Reduce risk of adverse environmental effects on Other Sea Users and Recreation
M028	As outlined in the FMMCP, Volume 3 , a Company Fisheries Liaison Officer (CFLO), Fishing Industry Representative (FIR), and Offshore Fisheries Liaison Officer(s) (OFLOs) will be appointed prior to commencement of development to liaise with local, regional and national fishing organisations, as well as individual fishers on offshore activities undertaken in relation the Offshore Project.	Pre-Construction, Construction, O&M and Decommissioning	Secured in the Section 36 Consent and/or Marine Licence via the condition for an FMMCP to be submitted to MD-LOT for approval.	Ensure all local fishermen, fisheries associations and organisations are consulted and notified of works relating to the Project

ID	Environmental Measure Proposed	Project Phase Measure Introduced	How the Environmental Measures will be Secured	Relevance to Assessment
M032	A Design Specification Layout Plan (DSLPL) will be developed and shared with commercial fisheries stakeholders through the Commercial Fisheries Working Group.	Pre-construction, construction, O&M and decommissioning	Secured in the Section 36 Consent and/or Marine Licence conditions via the condition for a DSLPL to be submitted to MD-LOT for approval.	Reduce risk of adverse effects to Commercial Fisheries and Other Sea Users and Recreation and promote coexistence.
M033	A Lighting and Marking Plan (LMP) will be developed prior to commencement of construction (building on the Outline LMP, Volume 3) in compliance with legislative requirements and best practice standards and guidance and adhered to.	Pre-construction, construction, O&M and decommissioning	Secured in the Section 36 Consent and/or Marine Licence conditions via the condition for a LMP to be submitted to MD-LOT for approval.	This commitment provides for minimising lighting impacts as far as practicable, whilst ensuring compliance with requirements for lighting and marking the Offshore Project.
M036	The Project will only install Wind Turbine Generators and Offshore Substation Platform (if required) above sea infrastructure within the Turbine Area.	Pre-construction, construction and O&M	To be secured through a condition of the Section 36 consent and/or Marine Licence.	Increases the separation distance of the Array Area from the Isle of Lewis/Eilean Leòdhais coast and NSA, minimising impacts on these receptors. Reduction in footprint of the turbine area, avoiding WTGs in the southwest portion of the Array Area closest to NSA. The increased separation

ID	Environmental Measure Proposed	Project Phase Measure Introduced	How the Environmental Measures will be Secured	Relevance to Assessment
				distance of the Array Area from the Isle of Lewis/ <i>Eilean Leòdhais</i> coast also increases open water for vessel transits for tourism and recreation.
M037	Use of local tour operator vessels or fishing vessels that meet relevant safety requirements, where possible to assist future Project activities, such as guard vessel opportunities.	Pre-construction, construction, O&M and decommissioning	Secured in the Section 36 Consent and/or Marine Licence conditions, and to be detailed within the FMMCP.	To provide beneficial opportunities to local vessels where possible
M040	Due regard will be given to landscape and visual design principles in the Design Specification Layout Plan post consent, with consideration of the seascape, landscape and visual impacts of the Offshore Project on the NSA. The DSLP will be shared with and approved by MD-LOT prior to construction commencing.	Pre-construction and construction	To be secured through a condition of the Section 36 consent and/or Marine Licence.	This commitment provides measures to minimise visual impacts of the Offshore Project on the NSA.
M041	The offshore construction workforce to be accommodated on vessels, with the exception of certain limited circumstances such as crew change over and leave, to reduce additional demand for housing / tourist accommodation on Lewis. Medical facilities to be provided on board vessels to treat minor injuries / illness	Construction	To be secured through a condition of the Section 36 consent and/or Marine Licence.	Reduce additional demand for tourist accommodation on Lewis and reduce disturbance to accommodation providers for Other Sea Users and Recreation activities.

ID	Environmental Measure Proposed	Project Phase Measure Introduced	How the Environmental Measures will be Secured	Relevance to Assessment
	and reduce additional pressure on existing services.			
M042	Project to work with key stakeholders and service providers to understand pressure points on existing services and on storage / port facilities on Lewis, and charter vessels and/or flights to transport crew and materials where required to avoid creating excess pressure, and potentially provide additional capacity. Large construction components to be transported by specialist vessels via private charter. The Project will engage with other developers on opportunities to collaborate on transport services and storage facilities, including through the Renewable Energy Major Developments Forum.	Construction	To be secured through a condition of the Section 36 consent and/or Marine Licence.	Reduce demand on port services and ferry capacity to reduce disruption to Other Sea Users and Recreation.

20.8 ASSESSMENT OF EFFECTS: CONSTRUCTION PHASE

20.8.1 LOSS OF ACCESS TO AQUACULTURE SUPPORT VESSELS DURING CONSTRUCTION

Magnitude

20.8.1.1 No aquaculture sites are identified within the Study Area, therefore there is no pathway of effect for potential impacts to specific aquaculture sites. Aquaculture support vessels are known to transit Offshore Development Area. Due to the presence of 500 m safety zones, installation vessels and construction activities there is potential for loss of access to aquaculture support vessels transiting the Offshore Development Area, causing temporary disruption and displacement during construction. The maximum design scenario is presented in **Table 20-11**.

Multinational aquaculture companies (Bakkafrost Scotland and Loch Fyne Oysters Ltd.)

20.8.1.2 The majority of aquaculture sites are located within Loch Roag/*Loch Ròg* and are operated by 4 main companies, 2 multi-national companies: Loch Fyne Oysters Ltd and Bakkafrost Scotland, and 2 local aquaculture companies: Uig Seafare Ltd and Loch Carloway Shellfish Ltd (Natural Scotland, 2025). Much of the vessel traffic associated with day-to-day aquaculture operations is confined to within Loch Roag/*Loch Ròg* and also along the northwestern coast of the Isle of Lewis/*Eilean Leòdhais*, south of the Array Area. Large wellboats and processing vessels chartered by multinational companies that transport finfish to and from the aquaculture sites within the Loch are identified to transit through the Offshore Cable Area of Search along the northwest coast of the Isle of Lewis/*Eilean Leòdhais*.

20.8.1.3 Vessel traffic survey data shows aquaculture support vessels to generally transit close to the coast and within Loch Roag/*Loch Ròg*. Operators associated with the aquaculture industry (Bakkafrost, Inverlussa, and Navigare Logistics) responded to the regular operators outreach (see Table 16-2 of **Chapter 16, Volume 2a**) stating that it would be unlikely that they would choose to make passage internally within the Array Area. Furthermore, based on feedback received during the Hazard Workshop (**Appendix 16.1, Volume 2c**) it was confirmed that any deviation to vessel routing would be minimal, as per **Chapter 16, Volume 2a**.

20.8.1.4 Loss of access to aquaculture support vessels will only occur in discrete spatial locations within the Offshore Development Area, such as within 500 m safety zones surrounding installation activities. Individual installation activities, such as piling and cable laying, will be temporary and short-term during the overall 5-year construction period, where Project vessel activity will be intermittent. Timely and efficient distribution of NtMs (M012), as well as M011 and M019 will further mitigate effects from loss of access. The magnitude of impact for multinational companies (Loch Fyne Oysters Ltd and Bakkafrost Scotland) is therefore considered to be **Low (adverse)**.

Local aquaculture companies (Uig Seafare Ltd. and Loch Carloway Shellfish Ltd.)

- 20.8.1.5 Local aquaculture companies operating within Loch Roag/Loch Ròg (particularly Loch Carloway Shellfish Ltd.) also engage in commercial fishing activities within the Offshore Cable Area of Search, intrinsically linking local aquaculture production and commercial fishing. The local potting fleet, consisting of 5-7 potting vessels, are based at Carloway/Càrlabhagh, and are most active inshore waters, extending activity out to and within the Array Area. The limited number of fishing vessels and local aquaculture businesses based at Carloway/Càrlabhagh amplifies the vulnerability of these local businesses to cascading impacts between fisheries and aquaculture.
- 20.8.1.6 During construction, the local potting fleet are most at risk from reduced access or exclusion from fishing grounds within the Offshore Cable Area of Search and the physical presence of infrastructure leading to gear snagging. The construction of 12 surface-laid Array Cables to Landfall for Scenario 2 (Onshore Landfall Substation) will result in long-term obstruction to potting activities within the Offshore Cable Area of Search. Because of this, the Offshore Cable Area of Search has been refined and reduced from 90.6 km² to 47 km² (an overall reduction of 48%) as part of an embedded mitigation measures to avoid the key inshore fishing grounds in the west of the original Offshore Cable Area of Search. Impacts to commercial fisheries are assessed in **Chapter 21, Volume 2a**, where reduced access or exclusion from fishing grounds within the Offshore Cable Area of Search and the physical presence of infrastructure leading to gear snagging during construction are assessed to have a residual significance of effect of Minor (adverse) to the local potting fleet.
- 20.8.1.7 Given the intrinsic link between local aquaculture and commercial fishing, impacts to commercial fisheries, such as reduced access and snagging, may indirectly affect local aquaculture businesses if local fishing is reduced. Impacts to commercial fisheries are assessed in **Chapter 21, Volume 2a**. Impacts to fish species involved in aquaculture also pose the potential to affect aquaculture businesses. Impacts to fish and shellfish ecology are considered in **Chapter 12, Volume 2a**. No significant residual impacts to Atlantic salmon or other fish species (including from underwater noise) are identified in **Chapter 12, Volume 2a**.
- 20.8.1.8 Loss of access to local aquaculture support vessels will only occur in discrete spatial locations within the Offshore Development Area, such as within 500 m safety zones surrounding installation activities. Individual installation activities, such as piling and cable laying, will be temporary and short-term during the overall 5-year construction period, where Project vessel activity will be intermittent. Timely and efficient distribution of NtMs (M012), as well as M011 and M019 will further mitigate effects from loss of access. Furthermore, **Chapter 21, Volume 2a** concludes no significant residual impacts on reduced access, exclusion or snagging to the local potting fleet who also engage in aquaculture activities, the magnitude of impact for local aquaculture companies (Uig Seafare Ltd and Loch Carloway Shellfish Ltd) is considered to be **Low (adverse)**. Relevant further mitigation measures that will be secured through a **Fisheries Mitigation, Monitoring and Communication Plan (FMMCP), Volume 3** and are described in **Chapter 21, Volume 2a**.

Sensitivity

Multinational aquaculture companies (Bakkafrost Scotland and Loch Fyna Oysters Ltd.)

20.8.1.9 Multinational aquaculture companies are of a high value, however because of this they are considered to have a greater ability to adapt and tolerate changes and given their large scale of operations are considered to be able to recover rapidly. As such multinational aquaculture companies are considered to have a **Low** sensitivity.

Local aquaculture companies (Uig Seafare Ltd. and Loch Carloway Shellfish Ltd.)

20.8.1.10 Local aquaculture companies are considered to have a limited ability to adapt and tolerate changes and therefore have a limited ability to recover. Given their links to commercial fishing, they are also considered to have a high cultural value. As such, local aquaculture companies are considered to have a **High** sensitivity.

Significance of effect

Multinational aquaculture companies (Bakkafrost Scotland and Loch Fyna Oysters Ltd.)

20.8.1.11 Based on the Low magnitude of effect and Low sensitivity of multinational aquaculture companies, the overall significance of effect is determined to be **Negligible** which is **Not Significant** in EIA terms.

Local aquaculture companies (Uig Seafare Ltd. and Loch Carloway Shellfish Ltd.)

20.8.1.12 Based on the Low magnitude of effect and High sensitivity of local aquaculture companies, the overall significance of effect is determined to be **Minor (adverse)** which is **Not Significant** in EIA terms.

Further Environmental Mitigation and Residual Effect

20.8.1.13 No additional mitigation is considered necessary because the likely effect in the absence of further mitigation (beyond the embedded commitments outlined in Section 20.7.2) is not significant in EIA terms.

20.8.2 INCREASED DEMAND FOR PORT SERVICES DURING CONSTRUCTION

Magnitude

20.8.2.1 Due to the presence of Project installation vessels and additional workforce associated with the Offshore Project, there is potential for increased demand for port services during construction. This has the potential to cause temporary disruption to ports and harbours and associated disruption to recreation and tourism activities. It is expected that ports northeast of the Array Area will be utilised on an adhoc and infrequent basis during the construction phase by installation vessels and CTVs. The maximum design scenario is presented in **Table 20-11**.

20.8.2.2 Potential beneficial economic and socio-economic impacts during the construction phase such as new jobs, increased demand for workers, goods and services, and supply chain opportunities are considered in **Chapter 6, Volume 2a**.

Small ports

20.8.2.3 The tourism season on the Isle of Lewis/*Eilean Leòdhais* generally lasts 7 - 8 months, with the peak months occurring between April – October, coinciding with the active months proposed during the construction phase. Many of the smaller ports located on the west of the Isle of Lewis/*Eilean Leòdhais* that are heavily associated with tourism and local fishing are located within Loch Roag/*Loch Ròg* south of the Offshore Project and include Carloway/*Càrlabhadh*, Breascleite/*Brèascleit*, Bernera/*Beàrnaraigh* and Miavaig/*Mìobhaig* (Marine Scotland, 2025) (**Plate 20-3**).

20.8.2.4 Personal pleasure craft, particularly from Miavaig port, local fishing vessels, from Carloway/*Càrlabhadh* and Breascleite/*Brèascleit*, and minor commercial passenger vessels, from Breascleite/*Brèascleit*, Kirkibost/*Eilean Chirceaboist* and Bernera/*Beàrnaraigh*, generally travel along the northwest coast of the Isle of Lewis/*Eilean Leòdhais*, along the north and south boundaries of the Array Area and through the Offshore Cable Area of Search, sometimes travelling around the Butt of Lewis/*Eilean Leòdhais* to Stornoway/*Steòrnabhagh*. It is expected that ports northeast of the Array Area will be utilised on an adhoc and infrequent basis by the Offshore Project during the construction phase, so although these smaller ports south of the Offshore Project are unlikely to be utilised, there is still the potential for indirect disruption to port services due to disruption to passenger, leisure and fishing vessel routes which operate from these ports.

20.8.2.5 Reduced access to local ports, harbours and facilities on vessels is further considered and assessed within **Chapter 16, Volume 2a**.

20.8.2.6 In line with embedded mitigation (M042), the Project will work with key stakeholders and service providers to understand pressure points on existing services and on storage / port facilities on Lewis, to avoid creating excess pressure, and potentially provide additional capacity. The Project will engage with other developers on opportunities to collaborate on transport services and storage facilities, including through the Renewable Energy Major Developments Forum. It is also the Project intention that the offshore construction workforce will be accommodated on vessels, with the exception limited circumstances such as crew change over and leave, to reduce additional demand on tourist accommodation on Lewis (M041).

20.8.2.7 It is considered that increased demand for small port services will only be disrupted indirectly due to disturbance to tourism and recreational vessels (further considered in Section 20.8.3) operating from small ports. Any disturbance to tourism and recreational vessels is expected to be associated with individual installation activities, such as piling and cable laying, which will be temporary and short-term during the overall 5-year construction period. In consideration of the above mitigation

measures, and indirect nature of impacts to small ports, the magnitude of impact is considered to be **Low (adverse)**.

Stornoway port

- 20.8.2.8 It is the Project intention that the offshore construction workforce will be accommodated on vessels, with the exception limited circumstances such as crew change over and leave, to reduce additional demand on tourist accommodation on Lewis (M041). This aims to reduce pressure on ferry services to the Isle of Lewis/*Eilean Leòdhais*, where the main Ullapool – Stornoway route, is usually served by the MV Loch Seaforth ferry (**Plate 20-3**). It is also anticipated that the new Stornoway Deep Water Terminal, which was completed in 2024, will be able to support the growing port capacity and accommodate larger cruise liners, as well as supporting the fabrication and transportation of renewable energy components as part of the 20-year Stornoway Port Authority Master Plan (2017).
- 20.8.2.9 In line with embedded mitigation (M042), the Project will work with key stakeholders and service providers to understand pressure points on existing services and on storage / port facilities on Lewis, to avoid creating excess pressure, and potentially provide additional capacity. Large construction components will be transported by specialist vessels via private charter thus not affecting the main Stornoway Port. The Project will engage with other developers on opportunities to collaborate on transport services and storage facilities, including through the Renewable Energy Major Developments Forum.
- 20.8.2.10 In consideration of the above mitigation measures, increased demand for Stornoway port services will be managed throughout the 5-year construction period. As the offshore workforce will be primarily accommodated offshore, any increased demand in port or ferry services at Stornoway port is expected to be required on an adhoc basis and be intermittent and short-term within the overall construction period. Therefore, the magnitude of impact for Stornoway port is considered to be **Low (adverse)**.

Sensitivity

Small ports

- 20.8.2.11 Small ports are considered to have a limited ability to adapt and tolerate changes due to their small size which means they can often only berth a few vessels at any one time. Therefore, small ports also have a limited potential for recovery. Given their importance and dependence on the tourism sector and links to local fishing communities, they are also considered to have a high cultural and local economic value. As such, small ports are considered to have a **High** sensitivity.

Stornoway port

- 20.8.2.12 Stornoway port is also of high value, however because of this it is considered to have a greater ability to adapt and tolerate changes and recover rapidly, given its increased facilities due to the

recent addition of the Stornoway Deep Water Terminal. As such Stornoway port is considered to have a **Low** sensitivity.

Significance of effect

Small ports

20.8.2.13 Based on the Low magnitude of effect and High sensitivity of small ports, the overall significance of effect is determined to be **Minor (adverse)** which is **Not Significant** in EIA terms.

Stornoway port

20.8.2.14 Based on the Low magnitude of effect and Low sensitivity of Stornoway port, the overall significance of effect is determined to be **Negligible** which is **Not Significant** in EIA terms.

Further Environmental Mitigation and Residual Effect

20.8.2.15 No additional mitigation is considered necessary because the likely effect in the absence of further mitigation (beyond the embedded commitments outlined in Section 20.7.2) is not significant in EIA terms.

20.8.3 LOSS OF ACCESS TO BOAT TOUR OPERATORS OR OTHER RECREATIONAL AND TOURISM ACTIVITIES

Magnitude

20.8.3.1 Due to the presence of 500 m safety zones, installation vessels and construction activities there is potential for loss of access to boat tour operators and other recreation and tourism activities within the Offshore Development Area, causing temporary disruption and displacement during construction. It is expected that ports northeast of the Array Area will be utilised on an ad hoc and infrequent basis during the construction phase by installation and CTVs. The maximum design scenario is presented in **Table 20-11**.

Boat tour operators

20.8.3.2 Many of the boat tour providers operate from ports around Loch Roag/*Loch Ròg*, such as Miavaig/*Miobhaig*, Kirkibost/*Eilean Chirceaboist* pier on Bernera/*Beàrnaraigh* Island, and further south from Leverburgh port/*An t-Òb* on Harris. Vessel traffic relating to boat tours is highest around the Uig/*Ùige* coastline and the islands of Loch Roag/*Loch Ròg*, with transits into the Atlantic to destinations like St Kilda/*Hiort* and the Flannan islands/*Na h-Eileanan Flannach* (**Plate 20-4**). As these boat tours generally do not transit through the Study Area, it is considered that there will be minimal interactions with tours within Loch Roag/*Loch Ròg* and to St Kilda/*Hiort* and the Flannan islands/*Na h-Eileanan Flannach* with the Offshore Project.

20.8.3.3 Other boat tours to the Shiant Islands/*Na h-Eileanan Seunta*, on the east of the Isle of Lewis/*Eilean Leòdhais*, and North Rona/*Rònaigh*, north of the Butt of Lewis/*Eilean Leòdhais*, would require boat

tours to travel along the northwest coast of the Isle of Lewis/*Eilean Leòdhais*. Most of these vessel routes travel south of the Array Area but transit through the Offshore Cable Area of Search where there is potential for interactions with installation vessels and installation of the Offshore Export Cable, within the 47 km² Offshore Cable Area of Search.

20.8.3.4 Only tours to the Shiant Islands/*Na h-Eileanan Seunta* and North Rona/*Rònaigh* pose the potential for some areas of direct spatial overlap during transit through the Offshore Cable Area of Search, and the potential for loss of access due to safety zones and areas of installation activities leading to potential disruption and displacement of usual boat tour routes. As installation of the Offshore Export Cable will not be continuous throughout the whole construction period, impacts are considered to be short-term and temporary, where Project vessel activity will be intermittent. Any loss of access due to safety zones or other installation activities will be limited to discrete spatial areas within the Offshore Cable Area of Search. Timely and efficient distribution of NtMs (M012), as well as M011 and M019 will further mitigate effects from loss of access. Based on this, the magnitude of impact to boat tour operators is considered to be **Low (adverse)**.

Surfing

20.8.3.5 The Isle of Lewis/*Eilean Leòdhais* and the Western Isles/*Na h-Eileanan Siar* are recognised as a globally important surfing destination, with the majority of surf spots and two surf schools also operating lessons on the west coast. Beaches at Barvas/*Barabhas or Barbhas or Barbhas* and Bru/*Brù* and Dalmore/*Dail mhòr* are the closest popular surfing beaches to the Offshore Project, at approximately 500 m and 15 km, respectively, from the Offshore Cable Area of Search. Other popular surfing beaches are located at Eorapie/*Eòrapaidh*, Cliff/*Cliobh* and Mangersta/*Mangarstadh* and are outside of the Study Area. The landfall is located in Upper Barvas/*Barabhas or Barbhas or Barbhas*.

20.8.3.6 The potential for loss of access to surfers is only identified at Barvas/*Barabhas or Barbhas* and Bru/*Brù* beaches which are located within the Study Area. Installation activities at the landfall location will occur for a maximum duration of 17 months and are considered short-term and temporary. It is also important to note that preferable conditions for cable lay vessels are in opposition to conditions required for surfing; with cable laying seeking calm waters and the Barvas/*Barabhas or Barbhas* reef requiring a swell of >1 m to provide conditions appropriate for surfing (SurfNerd, 2026).

20.8.3.7 Timely and efficient distribution of NtMs (M012), as well as M011 and M019 will further mitigate effects from loss of access. Given the potential for loss of access to surfers is only identified at one surfing location coupled with the short-term and temporary duration of construction at the landfall (17 months), the magnitude of impact to surfers is considered to be **Low (adverse)**.

Other sea users (including recreational users and tourists)

20.8.3.8 The tourism season on the Isle of Lewis/*Eilean Leòdhais* generally lasts 7 - 8 months, with the peak months occurring between April – October, coinciding with the active months proposed during the

construction phase. Recreation and tourism activities are generally associated with the smaller ports located on the west of the Isle of Lewis/*Eilean Leòdhais* within Loch Roag/*Loch Ròg* south of the Offshore Project. Some of the key ports include Breascleite/*Brèascleit*, Bernera/*Beàrnaraigh* and Miavaig/*Miobhaig* (Marine Scotland, 2025) (**Plate 20-5**). Overall recreational vessel activity is largely not present within the Offshore Project, however it is known that some personal pleasure craft, particularly from Miavig port and minor commercial passenger vessels from Breascleite/*Brèascleit*, Kirkibost/*Eilean Chirceaboist* and Bernera/*Beàrnaraigh*, travel along the northwest coast of the Isle of Lewis/*Eilean Leòdhais* and along the north and south boundaries of the Array Area and through the Offshore Cable Area of Search (**Plate 20-4**), sometimes travelling around the Butt of Lewis/*Eilean Leòdhais* to Stornoway/*Steòrnabhagh*. It is expected that ports northeast of the Array Area will be utilised on an adhoc and infrequent basis by the Offshore Project during the construction phase. Therefore, there is the potential for loss of access to recreational and tourism associated vessels transiting the Offshore Development Area due to avoidance of safety zones, Project vessels and installation activities leading to potential disruption and displacement effects.

20.8.3.9 Recreational activities, like open water swimming, paddleboarding, canoeing and sea kayaking generally occur within 5 km of the coastline (**Plate 20-5**). At its closest point the Array Area is located approximately 5 km from the shore. The refined Turbine Area incorporates an 11 km setback from South Lewis, Harris and North Uist National Scenic Area/*Siorrachd Leòdhais a Deas, na Hearadh agus Uibhist a Tuath*, however, still remains approximately 6 km from the shore at its nearest location. Barvas/*Barabhas or Barbhas*, Labost/*Àirigh nan Crodh* and between Ness/*Nis* and Dalmore/*Dail mhòr* are the key water sporting areas closest to the Offshore Project (Marine Scotland, 2015) (Strava, 2025). There is also a coastal rowing group located in Arnol/*Àrnoil* south of the Offshore Project. The closest beaches in relation to the Offshore Cable Area of Search are located at Barvas/*Barabhas or Barbhas* and Bru/*Brù*, approximately 500 m south, Arnol/*Àrnoil* beach, around 1.5 km south and Shawbost/*Siabost* beach, around 2.3 km south. These beaches are all popular with tourists and local walkers. The landfall is located in Upper Barvas/*Barabhas or Barbhas*.

20.8.3.10 Therefore, there is also potential for loss of access to other sea users within the Study Area due to avoidance of safety zones, Project vessels and installation activities leading to potential disruption and displacement effects.

20.8.3.11 Loss of access to other sea users and transiting recreational and tourism associated vessels will only occur in discrete spatial locations within the Offshore Development Area, such as within 500 m safety zones surrounding installation activities. Individual installation activities, such as piling and cable laying, will be temporary and short-term during the overall 5-year construction period, where Project vessel activity will be intermittent. However, due to the number of passenger and leisure vessel routes known to transit the Offshore Cable Area of Search and close proximity of several popular beaches and water sporting areas to the Offshore Cable Area of Search where there is

potential for direct spatial interactions, the magnitude of impact to recreation and tourism activities is considered to be Medium (adverse).

20.8.3.12 However, implementation of the Offshore Project embedded mitigation measures (as shown in **Table 20-12**) including only installing surface piercing infrastructure within the setback and reduced Turbine Area (M036), use of local boat tour operators that meet relevant safety requirements, where possible to assist future Project activities, creation of an Access Management Plan (M046) and timely and efficient distribution of NtMs (M012), as well as M011 and M019 will reduce the Medium (adverse) magnitude of effect of temporary displacement/disturbance to other sea users to an overall **Low (adverse)** magnitude of effect.

Sensitivity

Boat tour operators

20.8.3.13 Boat tour operators have a limited ability to adapt and tolerate changes as they are heavily dependent on tourism to the Isle of Lewis/*Eilean Leòdhais* which directly supports over 1,000 full-time jobs on the Western Isles/*Na h-Eileanan Siar* (CnES & Visit Scotland, 2017). Given their importance to the tourism industry and as local businesses they are also considered to have a high value. It is also considered that boat tour operators will have a limited ability to adapt or tolerate route changes to key destinations which require transit through the Offshore Project. As such, boat tour operators are considered to have a **High** sensitivity.

Surfing

20.8.3.14 Surfing is an important recreational activity which encourages tourism to Isle of Lewis/*Eilean Leòdhais*. Although surfers are mobile receptors they can be restricted by swell, waves and weather conditions to certain locations. Given their importance to the tourism industry and as local businesses they are also considered to have a high value. As such, surfing is considered to be of a **High** sensitivity.

Other sea users (including recreational users and tourists)

20.8.3.15 Tourism is a major contributor to the economy of the Isle of Lewis/*Eilean Leòdhais* and the wider Western Isles/*Na h-Eileanan Siar*, accounting for approximately 10-15% of the overall economic activity on the islands (Visits Scotland, 2017). As such, other recreation and tourism activities are considered to be of a high value. Given the mobile nature of many recreational activities they are considered to have some ability to adapt and tolerate changes, however businesses directly dependent on recreational activities and tourism are considered to have a limited ability to recover from changes to recreation and tourism patterns. As such, other recreation and tourism activities are considered to be of a **High** sensitivity.

Significance of effect

Boat tour operators

20.8.3.16 Based on the Low magnitude of effect and High sensitivity of boat tour operators, the overall significance of effect is determined to be **Minor (adverse)** which is **Not Significant** in EIA terms.

Surfing

20.8.3.17 Based on the Low magnitude of effect and High sensitivity of surfing, the overall significance of effect is determined to be **Minor (adverse)** which is **Not Significant** in EIA terms.

Other sea users (including recreational users and tourists)

20.8.3.18 Based on the Low magnitude of effect and High sensitivity of other recreation and tourism activities, the overall significance of effect is determined to be **Minor (adverse)** which is **Not Significant** in EIA terms.

Further Environmental Mitigation and Residual Effect

20.8.3.19 No additional mitigation is considered necessary because the likely effect in the absence of further mitigation (beyond the embedded commitments outlined in Section 20.7.2) is not significant in EIA terms.

20.8.4 LOSS OF ACCESS TO RECREATIONAL SEA ANGLERS AND SPECIFIC ANGLING TOUR OPERATORS

Magnitude

20.8.4.1 Due to the presence of 500 m safety zones, installation vessels and construction activities there is potential for loss of access to recreational sea anglers and angling specific boat tours within the Offshore Development Area, causing temporary disruption and displacement during construction. It is expected that ports northeast of the Array Area will be utilised on an adhoc and infrequent basis during the construction phase by installation vessels and CTVs. The maximum design scenario is presented in **Table 20-11**.

Recreational sea anglers

20.8.4.2 Recreational sea angling (defined as sea fishing primarily using rod and line or hand-held line where the purpose is recreation and not for the sale or trade of the catch) by private or charter boats are highest around areas like Cliff/*Cliobh*, Carloway/*Càrlabhagh* and Shawbost/*Siabost* along the western coast of the Isle of Lewis/*Eilean Leòdhais* (Marine Scotland, 2015), with Shawbost/*Siabost* located the closest to the Offshore Cable Area of Search, approximately 2.3 km south. Recreational sea anglers use rod and line methods to target sea trout, pollack and mackerel and to a lesser extent also target common ling, haddock and Atlantic cod. Sea trout are present between June-October whilst the peak season for pollack and mackerel angling is during June-September.

- 20.8.4.3 Sea angling by rod and line for bluefin tuna also occurs around the Western Isles/*Na h-Eileanan Siar*, however fishing for bluefin tuna is heavily regulated. Currently, only one vessel on Harris has been granted a commercial fishing licence for bluefin tuna.
- 20.8.4.4 Due to the use of rod and line methods, the risk of snagging is greatly reduced within the 47 km² Offshore Cable Area of Search. Therefore, impacts to recreational anglers are considered to be restricted to loss of access leading to vessel related disturbance during the construction phase of the Offshore Project. Impacts to commercial fisheries are assessed in **Chapter 21, Volume 2a** and impacts to other fish species are assessed in **Chapter 12, Volume 2a**.
- 20.8.4.5 Loss of access to recreational sea anglers will only occur in discrete spatial locations within the Offshore Development Area, such as within 500 m safety zones surrounding installation activities. Individual installation activities, such as piling and cable laying, will be temporary and short-term during the overall 5-year construction period, where Project vessel activity will be intermittent. Mitigation measures are in place to mitigate loss of access and disturbance effects to vessels, including timely and efficient distribution of NtMs (M012), marking of all surface piercing infrastructure on Admiralty charts (M011). Therefore, in consideration of the embedded mitigation measures, despite construction months April-October overlapping with peak angling seasons for sea trout, pollack and mackerel, the magnitude of impact to recreational sea anglers is considered to be **Low (adverse)**.
- Angling tour operators*
- 20.8.4.6 The Stornoway Sea Angling Club are highlighted to fish the Offshore Development Area during the summer and autumn months weekly with up to 10-12 paying anglers onboard (MD-LOT, 2024).. Additionally, Isle of Harris Sea Tours offers bluefin tuna fishing trips from Leverburgh port/*An t-Òb* on Harris on a catch/tag/release basis. As the Isle of Harris Sea Tours are located outside of the Study Area it is considered that there is no potential for interaction between the Project and this tour operator.
- 20.8.4.7 Loss of access to the Stornoway Sea Angling Club will only occur in discrete spatial locations within the Offshore Development Area, such as within 500 m safety zones surrounding installation activities. Individual installation activities, such as piling and cable laying, will be temporary and short-term during the overall 5-year construction period, where Project vessel activity will be intermittent. Mitigation measures are in place to mitigate loss of access and disturbance effects to vessels, including timely and efficient distribution of NtMs (M012), marking of all surface piercing infrastructure on Admiralty charts (M011) and the use of local tour operator vessels or fishing vessels that meet relevant safety requirements, where possible to assist future Project activities (M037). Therefore, the magnitude of impact to angling tour operators is considered to be **Low (adverse)**.

Sensitivity

Recreational sea anglers

20.8.4.8 Recreational sea angling is strongly linked to the community and cultural tradition, as such it is considered to be of a high cultural value. However, given the mobile nature of recreational sea angling they are considered to have some ability to adapt and tolerate changes and be able to recover rapidly from temporary disruption. Therefore, recreational sea anglers are considered to have a **Medium** sensitivity.

Angling tour operators

20.8.4.9 Angling tour operators have a limited ability to adapt and tolerate changes as they are heavily dependent on tourism to the Isle of Lewis/*Eilean Leòdhais*. Given their contribution to the tourism industry and as local businesses they are also considered to have a high value and a limited ability to recover from economic impacts. As such, angling tour operators are considered to have a **High** sensitivity.

Significance of effect

Recreational sea anglers

20.8.4.10 Based on the Low magnitude of effect and Medium sensitivity of recreational sea anglers, the overall significance of effect is determined to be **Minor (adverse)** which is **Not Significant** in EIA terms.

Angling tour operators

20.8.4.11 Based on the Low magnitude of effect and High sensitivity of angling tour operators, the overall significance of effect is determined to be **Minor (adverse)** which is **Not Significant** in EIA terms.

Further Environmental Mitigation and Residual Effect

20.8.4.12 No additional mitigation is considered necessary because the likely effect in the absence of further mitigation (beyond the embedded commitments outlined in Section 20.7.2) is not significant in EIA terms.

20.8.5 AMENITY EFFECTS AS A RESULT OF CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITIES

Magnitude

20.8.5.1 The refined Turbine Area is located 6 km from the shore and 11 km from the South Lewis, Harris and North Uist NSA/*Siorrachd Leòdhais a Deas, na Hearadh agus Uibhist a Tuath* where piling of WTGs will occur during construction. Therefore, there is the potential for a combination of visual and noise impacts to result in effects on amenity and amenity value for tourism assets and other sea users due to construction of the Offshore Project. As per M036, The Offshore Project will only install above sea infrastructure within the 'Turbine Area'. This is defined by an 11 km setback buffer

of the NSA and 6 km setback buffer of the Isle of Lewis/*Eilean Leòdhais* coastline. The maximum design scenario is presented in **Table 20-11**.

- 20.8.5.2 The tourism season on the Isle of Lewis/*Eilean Leòdhais* generally lasts 7 - 8 months, with the peak months occurring between April – October, coinciding with the active months proposed during the construction phase. Beaches and coastal scenery are one of the main attractions for tourists to the Isle of Lewis/*Eilean Leòdhais* and the Western Isles/*Na h-Eileanan Siar*, as highlighted in the Outer Hebrides 2023 Visitor Survey where scenery and landscape (86%) and outdoors activities (43%) like sea sports, coastal rambling and wildlife watching were selected as the top reasons to visit the Outer Hebrides/*Na h-Eileanan Siar* (Visit Scotland, 2023). Consultation undertaken by the Project has reflected concerns within the Outer Hebrides/*Na h-Eileanan Siar* tourism sector that any degradation to the currently untouched and picturesque coastal seascape would deter visitors given that scenery and landscape is the top attraction for tourists in the Outer Hebrides/*Na h-Eileanan Siar*. Despite this, there is little conclusive evidence that offshore wind farms have a negative impact on tourism and recreation (Glasson et al., 2021), with 88% of coastal visitors stating that they would not avoid an area because there is an offshore wind farm visible from the shore (Scottish Government, 2021). Some studies also cite offshore wind farms may also act as a tourism attractant and provide a niche in the tourism market (Glasson et al., 2021). It is acknowledged that visual effects are context dependant and will vary by landscape type, visitor motivation and visibility within the ZTV. It is also acknowledged that these studies have not been undertaken in sites directly comparable to the Project, given its highly rural location along the west coast of the Isle of Lewis/*Eilean Leòdhais*.
- 20.8.5.3 There are a number of onshore tourism attractions located on the west coast of the Isle of Lewis/*Eilean Leòdhais*, including the Loch na Muilne RSPB reserve and a high concentration of sites of historic and archaeological interest. In particular, tourists visiting the onshore sites Arnol/*Àrnoil* Blackhouse and Trushal Standing Stone/*Clach an Trushal* which are located within the ZTV (**Plate 20-1**) have the potential to be affected due to the amenity effects posed by WTGs within the refined Turbine Area. There is also potential for effects from the Offshore Project on other onshore receptors like tourists using accommodation providers located within the ZTV on the west coast, and for users of coastal core paths and other rights of way.
- 20.8.5.4 An assessment of the visual effects of the Offshore Project on views along recreational routes such as the Hebridean Way, Timeless Way, Barvas/*Barabhas* or *Barbhas* and Brue/*Brù* walking route, West Side Coastal Path and other core paths is presented in **Chapter 18, Volume 2a** with reference to the ZTV in **Figure 18.9, Volume 2b**. **Chapter 18, Volume 2a** assesses the effects on views from the Offshore Project on recreational routes (where there is visibility) to be Minor – Major and Significant. **Chapter 18, Volume 2a** also assessed effects on viewpoints popular with visitors, including Barvas/*Barabhas* or *Barbhas* Beach, Loch na Muilne RSPB and Arnol/*Àrnoil* Blackhouse, where visual effects are considered Major and Significant.

- 20.8.5.5 As noted in Section 20.6.1.37, recreational activities, like open water swimming, paddleboarding, canoeing and sea kayaking generally occur within 5 km of the coastline (**Plate 20-5**) and are therefore within the ZTV (**Plate 20-1**). At its closest point, the Array Area is located approximately 5 km from the shore, and the refined Turbine Area still remains approximately 6 km from the shore at its nearest location. Recreational and passenger vessels are also identified to travel along the northwest coast of the Isle of Lewis/*Eilean Leòdhais*, south of the Array Area and through the Offshore Cable Area of Search (**Plate 20-3** and **Plate 20-4**), thus transiting the ZTV (**Plate 20-1**).
- 20.8.5.6 Also located within the ZTV are some of the favourite beaches for tourists and the closest beaches in relation to the Offshore Cable Area of Search are located at Barvas/*Barabhas* or *Barbhas* and Bru/*Brù*, approximately 500 m south, Arnol/*Àrnoil* beach, around 1.5 km south and Shawbost/*Siabost* beach, around 2.3 km south. These beaches are all popular with tourists and local walkers and many of these beaches also have neighbouring designated campsites. Amenity effects arising as a result of the Offshore Project and OTW Project in combination are considered in Section 20.12.
- 20.8.5.7 Arnol/*Àrnoil*, Shawbost/*Siabost* and Dalmore/*Dail mhòr* beaches also host viewpoints off the northwestern coast of the Isle of Lewis/*Eilean Leòdhais* from the coastal paths, as well as the Stac a'Phris Arch viewpoint which is located between Dalmore/*Dail mhòr* and Shawbost/*Siabost*.
- 20.8.5.8 **Chapter 19, Volume 2a**, reports that there would be significant adverse night-time noise effects for 6 noise sensitive receptors (NSRs) associated with piling activity during construction, and significant adverse evening noise effects for two NSRs. The NSRs assessed include dwellings in the settlements of Garenin/*Na Gearrannan*, Dalmore/*Dail Mhor*, Shawbost/*Siabost*, Labost, Brue/*Brù*, and Ballantrushal/*Baile an Truiseil* on the west coast of Lewis/*Eilean Leòdhais*. While it is not expected that nighttime noise would affect visitors to the Blackhouse Village, there is the potential, that tourist accommodation providers within these settlements could be affected.
- 20.8.5.9 The Applicant will commit to producing and following a Piling Strategy to mitigate and minimise the adverse impacts (A007). The Piling Strategy will be further refined through detailed design and availability of equipment following the contractor tendering process and equipment readiness. Following this, further mitigation to minimise potential noise impact will be explored and detailed in the Piling Strategy for consultation with MD-LOT. This plan will be produced post-consent. With this further mitigation in place, the residual noise effect for NSRs would be reduced to Minor, and Not Significant. **Chapter 19, Volume 2a** does not assess effects for outdoor locations such as beaches or footpaths. However, users of these receptors are typically transitory, and the largest noise impacts would be at nighttime, which reduces the likelihood of noise effects for tourists using these resources.
- 20.8.5.10 The construction period (5 years) will be short-term and temporary. However, the construction period overlaps with the peak months for tourism between April – October, and there is potential for direct spatial overlap of other sea users and onshore tourism receptors with the Offshore

Project ZTV (**Plate 20-1**). Major and Significant visual effects are assessed within **Chapter 18, Volume 2a** to views and viewpoints, however there is little conclusive evidence that these visual effects will have a negative impact on tourism and recreation (Glasson et al., 2021), and further evidence to suggest that tourists and recreational users would not avoid an area because there is an offshore wind farm visible from the shore (Scottish Government, 2021). By committing to produce an Offshore Airborne Piling Noise Management Plan post-consent, **Chapter 19, Volume 2a** reports that residual noise effects are reduced to Minor (adverse), and Not Significant. Therefore, in consideration of both visual and noise effects during construction the combined magnitude of amenity effects as a result of the Offshore Project to recreation and tourism assets is considered to be **Low (adverse)**.

20.8.5.11 Further consideration of visual effects are assessed in **Chapter 18, Volume 2a** and impacts relating to cultural setting are assessed in **Chapter 15, Volume 2a**. Effects on the tourism sector from the Project as a whole are assessed in **Chapter 6, Volume 2a**.

Sensitivity

Other sea users and onshore tourism and recreation assets

20.8.5.12 The sensitivity of tourism assets and other sea users and onshore tourism and recreation assets is considered to be the same as described in Section 20.8.3 and is of a **High** sensitivity.

Significance of effect

20.8.5.13 Based on the Low magnitude of effect and High sensitivity of other sea users the overall significance of effect is determined to be **Minor (adverse)** which is **Not Significant** in EIA terms.

Further Environmental Mitigation and Residual Effect

20.8.5.14 No additional mitigation is considered necessary because the likely effect in the absence of further mitigation (beyond the embedded commitments outlined in Section 20.7.2) is not significant in EIA terms.

20.9 ASSESSMENT OF EFFECTS: OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE

20.9.1 LOSS OF ACCESS TO AQUACULTURE SUPPORT VESSELS DURING OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE

Magnitude

20.9.1.1 No aquaculture sites are identified within the Study Area, therefore there is no pathway of effect for potential impacts to specific aquaculture sites. Aquaculture support vessels are known to transit Offshore Development Area. Due to the presence of Project vessels conducting maintenance and repairs and avoidance of 500 m safety zones during major maintenance activities, there is potential for loss of access to aquaculture support vessels transiting the Offshore Development Area, causing

temporary disruption and displacement during O&M. The maximum design scenario is presented in **Table 20-11**.

Multinational aquaculture companies (Bakkafrost Scotland and Loch Fyna Oysters Ltd.)

20.9.1.2 The majority of offshore aquaculture sites are located within Loch Roag/Loch Ròg. Much of the vessel traffic associated with day-to-day aquaculture operations is confined to within Loch Roag/Loch Ròg and also along the northwestern coast of the Isle of Lewis/Eilean Leòdhais, south of the Array Area. Large wellboats and processing vessels chartered by multinational companies that transport finfish to and from the aquaculture sites within the Loch are identified to transit through the Offshore Cable Area of Search along the northwest coast of the Isle of Lewis/Eilean Leòdhais. As such there is potential for loss of access leading to temporary disruption and displacement of aquaculture support vessels transiting the Offshore Development Area during O&M.

20.9.1.3 Vessel traffic survey data shows aquaculture support vessels to generally transit close to the coast and within Loch Roag/Loch Ròg. Operators associated with the aquaculture industry (Bakkafrost, Inverlussa, and Navigare Logistics) responded to the regular operators outreach (see Table 16-2 of **Chapter 16, Volume 2a**) stating that it would be unlikely that they would choose to make passage internally within the Array Area. Furthermore, based on feedback received during the Hazard Workshop (**Appendix 16.1, Volume 2c**) it was confirmed that any deviation to vessel routing would be minimal, as per **Chapter 16, Volume 2a**.

20.9.1.4 The magnitude of impact for multinational companies (Loch Fyne Oysters Ltd and Bakkafrost Scotland) is considered to be less than that of construction due to the lower number of vessel trips and infrequent nature of short-term and temporary repair events which are expected to be spread out across the 35 year operational lifetime of the Project. Therefore, the magnitude of impacts is considered to be **Low (adverse)**.

Local aquaculture companies (Uig Seafare Ltd. and Loch Carloway Shellfish Ltd.)

20.9.1.5 As described in Section **Error! Reference source not found.**, local aquaculture production is intrinsically linked to commercial fishing, particularly with the local potting fleet. The relationship between local aquaculture and commercial fishing also further supports small ports in Loch Roag/Loch Ròg, such as Carloway/Càrlabhaigh port, where the local potting fleet is based.

20.9.1.6 The main impact to the local potting fleet during the O&M phase is the physical presence of infrastructure leading to gear snagging, which is assessed to be a Minor (adverse) residual significance of effect within **Chapter 21, Volume 2a**. Relevant further mitigation measures that will be secured through a Fisheries Mitigation, Monitoring and Communication Plan are described in **Chapter 21, Volume 2a**.

20.9.1.7 Loss of access to local aquaculture support vessels is considered to be less than that of construction due to the lower number of vessel trips and infrequent nature of short-term and temporary repair events which are expected to be spread out across the 35 year operational

lifetime of the Project, coupled with the Minor (adverse) residual significance of effect for gear snagging during the O&M phase (as assessed in **Chapter 21, Volume 2a**) the magnitude of impact for local aquaculture companies (Uig Seafare Ltd and Loch Carloway Shellfish Ltd) is considered to be **Low (adverse)**.

Sensitivity of receptor

Multinational aquaculture companies (Bakkafrost Scotland and Loch Fyna Oysters Ltd.)

20.9.1.8 The sensitivity of multinational aquaculture companies is considered to be the same as described in Section **Error! Reference source not found.** and is of a **Low** sensitivity.

Local aquaculture companies (Uig Seafare Ltd. and Loch Carloway Shellfish Ltd.)

20.9.1.9 The sensitivity of local aquaculture companies is considered to be the same as described in Section **Error! Reference source not found.** and is of a **High** sensitivity.

Significance of effect

Multinational aquaculture companies (Bakkafrost Scotland and Loch Fyna Oysters Ltd.)

20.9.1.10 Based on the Low magnitude of effect and Low sensitivity of multinational aquaculture companies, the overall significance of effect is determined to be **Negligible** which is **Not Significant** in EIA terms.

Local aquaculture companies (Uig Seafare Ltd. and Loch Carloway Shellfish Ltd.)

20.9.1.11 Based on the Low magnitude of effect and High sensitivity of local aquaculture companies, the overall significance of effect is determined to be **Minor (adverse)** which is **Not Significant** in EIA terms.

Further Environmental Mitigation and Residual Effect

20.9.1.12 No additional mitigation is considered necessary because the likely effect in the absence of further mitigation (beyond the embedded commitments outlined in Section 20.7.2) is not significant in EIA terms.

20.9.2 INCREASED DEMAND FOR PORT SERVICES DURING OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE

Magnitude

20.9.2.1 Due to the presence of Project vessels and additional workforce associated with the Offshore Project, there is potential for increased demand for port services during O&M. This has the potential to cause temporary disruption to ports and harbours and associated disruption to recreation and tourism activities. It is expected that ports northeast of the Array Area will be utilised on an adhoc and infrequent basis during the O&M phase by cable repair vessels and CTVs. The maximum design scenario is presented in **Table 20-11**.

20.9.2.2 Potential beneficial economic and socio-economic impacts during the O&M phase such as new jobs, increased demand for workers, goods and services, and supply chain opportunities are considered in **Chapter 6, Volume 2a**.

Small ports

20.9.2.3 As described in Section **Error! Reference source not found.**, many of the smaller ports are heavily associated with tourism and local fishing and are located within Loch Roag/*Loch Ròg* south of the Offshore Project (**Plate 20-3**). Vessels from these ports, generally travel along the northwest coast of the Isle of Lewis/*Eilean Leòdhais*, along the north and south boundaries of the Array Area and through the Offshore Cable Area of Search, sometimes travelling around the Butt of Lewis/*Eilean Leòdhais* to Stornoway/*Steòrnabhagh*. It is expected that ports northeast of the Array Area will be utilised on an adhoc and infrequent basis by the Offshore Project during the O&M phase, so although these smaller ports south of the Offshore Project are unlikely to be directly utilised, there is still the potential for indirect disturbance to port services due to disruption to passenger, leisure and fishing vessels routes which operate from these ports.

20.9.2.4 Reduced access to local ports, harbours and facilities is further considered and assessed within **Chapter 16, Volume 2a**.

20.9.2.5 In line with embedded mitigation (M042), the Project will work with key stakeholders and service providers to understand pressure points on existing services and on storage / port facilities on Lewis, to avoid creating excess pressure, and potentially provide additional capacity. The Project will engage with other developers on opportunities to collaborate on transport services and storage facilities, including through the Renewable Energy Major Developments Forum. It is also the Project intention that the offshore construction workforce will be accommodated on vessels, with the exception limited circumstances such as crew change over and leave, to reduce additional demand on tourist accommodation on Lewis (M041).

20.9.2.6 Project vessel activity associated with the Offshore Project during the O&M phase is expected to be less than that of construction and will be infrequent throughout the 35 year Project lifetime. Based on this, the magnitude of impact for small ports is considered to be **Low (adverse)**.

Stornoway port

20.9.2.7 It is the Project intention that the offshore construction workforce will be accommodated on vessels, with the exception limited circumstances such as crew change over and leave, to reduce additional demand on tourist accommodation on Lewis (M041). This aims to reduce pressure on ferry services to the Isle of Lewis/*Eilean Leòdhais*, where the main Ullapool – Stornoway route, is usually served by the MV Loch Seaforth ferry (**Plate 20-3**). The new Stornoway Deep Water Terminal is also expected to be able to support the growing port capacity and accommodate larger cruise liners, as well as supporting the fabrication and transportation of renewable energy components as part of the 20-year Stornoway Port Authority Master Plan (2017).

20.9.2.8 Project vessel activity associated with the Offshore Project during the O&M phase is expected to be less than that of construction and will be infrequent throughout the 35 year Project lifetime. Based on this and in consideration of M041 and M042, the magnitude of impact for Stornoway port is considered to be **Low (adverse)**.

Sensitivity

Small ports

20.9.2.9 The sensitivity of small ports is considered to be the same as described in Section **Error! Reference source not found.** and is of a **High** sensitivity.

Stornoway port

20.9.2.10 The sensitivity of Stornoway port is considered to be the same as described in Section **Error! Reference source not found.** and is of a **Low** sensitivity.

Significance of effect

Small ports

20.9.2.11 Based on the Low magnitude of effect and High sensitivity of small ports, the overall significance of effect is determined to be **Minor (adverse)** which is **Not Significant** in EIA terms.

Stornoway port

20.9.2.12 Based on the Low magnitude of effect and Low sensitivity of Stornoway port, the overall significance of effect is determined to be **Negligible** which is **Not Significant** in EIA terms.

Further Environmental Mitigation and Residual Effect

20.9.2.13 No additional mitigation is considered necessary because the likely effect in the absence of further mitigation (beyond the embedded commitments outlined in Section 20.7.2) is not significant in EIA terms.

20.9.3 LOSS OF ACCESS TO BOAT TOUR OPERATORS OR OTHER RECREATIONAL AND TOURISM ACTIVITIES

Magnitude

20.9.3.1 Due to the presence of 500 m safety zones, Project vessels and O&M activities there is potential for loss of access to boat tour operators and other recreation and tourism activities within the Offshore Development Area, causing temporary disruption and displacement during the O&M phase. It is expected that ports northeast of the Array Area will be utilised on an adhoc and infrequent basis during the O&M phase. The maximum design scenario is presented in **Table 20-11**.

Boat tour operators

- 20.9.3.2 As described in Section 20.8.3, many of the boat tour providers operate from ports around Loch Roag/*Loch Ròg*. As boat tours around the Uig/*Ùige* coastline, within Loch Roag/*Loch Ròg* and into the Atlantic to destinations like St Kilda/*Hiort* and the Flannan islands/*Na h-Eileanan Flannach* generally do not transit through the Study Area (**Plate 20-4**), it is considered that there will be minimal interactions between the Offshore Project and these tours during the O&M phase.
- 20.9.3.3 Other boat tours to the Shiant Islands/*Na h-Eileanan Seunta* and North Rona/*Rònaigh* require boat tours to travel along the northwest coast of the Isle of Lewis/*Eilean Leòdhais*, south of the Array Area and transit through the Offshore Cable Area of Search. As no above sea infrastructure will be located in the Offshore Cable Area of Search it is considered that there will be no permanent loss of access to boat tour operators transiting the Offshore Cable Area of Search during the O&M phase. Any loss of access will be due to interference with Project vessels and safety zones around maintenance activities which will be temporary and intermittent throughout the Project lifetime.
- 20.9.3.4 Only tours to the Shiant Islands/*Na h-Eileanan Seunta* and North Rona/*Rònaigh* pose the potential for some areas of direct spatial overlap during transit through the Offshore Cable Area of Search, and the potential for loss of access due to safety zones and areas of maintenance activities leading to potential disruption and displacement of usual boat tour routes. The magnitude of impact to boat tour operators is considered to be less than that of construction due to the lower number of vessel trips and the spatially discrete and infrequent nature of repair events which are expected to be spread out across the 35 year operational lifetime of the Project. Based on this, the magnitude of impact to boat tour operators is considered to be **Low (adverse)**.

Surfing

- 20.9.3.5 As described in Section 20.8.3, the Isle of Lewis/*Eilean Leòdhais* and the Western Isles/*Na h-Eileanan Siar* are recognised as a globally important surfing destination. Beaches at Barvas/*Barabhas or Barbhas* and Bru/*Brù* and Dalmore/*Dail mhòr* are the closest popular surfing beaches to the Offshore Project, at approximately 500 m and 15 km, respectively, from the Offshore Cable Area of Search. The landfall is located in Upper Barvas/*Barabhas or Barbhas*.
- 20.9.3.6 Potential for direct spatial overlap is only identified with one surfing beach, all other surfing beaches are outside of the Study Area. As no above sea infrastructure will be located at the landfall location it is considered that there will be no permanent loss of access to surfers. Any loss of access will be due safety zones around maintenance activities which will be temporary and intermittent throughout the Project lifetime. As such, the magnitude of impact to surfers is considered to be **Low (adverse)**.

Other sea users (including recreational users and tourists)

- 20.9.3.7 As described in Section 20.8.3, recreation and tourism activities are generally associated with the ports located within Loch Roag/*Loch Ròg* and recreational vessel activity is largely not present

within the Offshore Development Area (**Plate 20-5**). However, it is known that some personal leisure craft and minor commercial passenger vessels travel along the north and south boundaries of the Array Area through the Offshore Cable Area of Search (**Plate 20-4**). As no above sea infrastructure will be located in the Offshore Cable Area of Search it is considered that there will be no permanent loss of access to other sea users transiting the Offshore Cable Area of Search during the O&M phase. Any loss of access will be due to interference with Project vessels and safety zones around maintenance activities which will be temporary and intermittent throughout the Project lifetime.

20.9.3.8 It is difficult to quantify impacts to other water sporting activities, such as canoeing, paddleboarding and kayaking, given the lack of information available to determine their presence and economic value. These recreational activities are generally observed within 5 km of the coastline (**Plate 20-5**) and therefore there is potential for some areas of direct spatial overlap within the Offshore Cable Area of Search. Recreational activities are predominantly located around Barvas/*Barabhas* or *Barbhas* and Bru/*Brù*, Labost/*Àirigh nan Crodh*, Shawbost/*Siabost* and between Ness/*Nis* and Dalmore/*Dail mhòr*. The landfall is located in Upper Barvas/*Barabhas* or *Barbhas*.

20.9.3.9 The magnitude of impacts to recreation and tourism activities during the O&M phase are expected to be less than that of construction, due to the lower number of vessel trips and infrequent nature of repair events which are expected to be spread out across the 35 year operational lifetime of the Project. As no above sea infrastructure will be located in the Offshore Cable Area of Search it is considered that there will be no permanent loss of access to recreation and tourism activities within the Offshore Cable Area of Search during the O&M phase. As such, the magnitude of impact to other recreation and tourism activities is considered to be **Low (adverse)**.

Sensitivity

Boat tour operators

20.9.3.10 The sensitivity of boat tour operators is considered to be the same as described in Section 20.8.3 and is of a **High** sensitivity.

Surfing

20.9.3.11 The sensitivity of surfers is considered to be the same as described in Section 20.8.3 and is of a **High** sensitivity.

Other sea users (including recreational users and tourists)

20.9.3.12 The sensitivity of other recreation and tourism is considered to be the same as described in Section 20.8.3 and is of a **High** sensitivity.

Significance of effect

Boat tour operators

20.9.3.13 Based on the Low magnitude of effect and High sensitivity of boat tour operators, the overall significance of effect is determined to be **Minor (adverse)** which is **Not Significant** in EIA terms.

Surfing

20.9.3.14 Based on the Low magnitude of effect and High sensitivity of surfing, the overall significance of effect is determined to be **Minor (adverse)** which is **Not Significant** in EIA terms.

Other sea users (including recreational users and tourists)

20.9.3.15 Based on the Low magnitude of effect and High sensitivity of other recreation and tourism activities, the overall significance of effect is determined to be **Minor (adverse)** which is **Not Significant** in EIA terms.

Further Environmental Mitigation and Residual Effect

20.9.3.16 No additional mitigation is considered necessary because the likely effect in the absence of further mitigation (beyond the embedded commitments outlined in Section 20.7.2) is not significant in EIA terms.

20.9.4 LOSS OF ACCESS TO RECREATIONAL SEA ANGLERS AND SPECIFIC ANGLING TOUR OPERATORS

Magnitude

20.9.4.1 Due to the presence of 500 m safety zones, Project vessels and maintenance activities there is potential for loss of access to recreational sea anglers and angling specific boat tours within the Offshore Development Area, causing temporary disruption and displacement during O&M. It is expected that recreational sea angling will be able to continue within the Offshore Cable Area of Search and Array Area during the O&M phase, except where there is surface piercing infrastructure. It is expected that ports northeast of the Array Area will be utilised on an adhoc and infrequent basis during the O&M phase. The maximum design scenario is presented in **Table 20-11**.

Recreational sea anglers

20.9.4.2 As described in Section 20.8.4, recreational sea angling is highest around Cliff/*Cliobh*, Carloway/*Càrlabhadh* and Shawbost/*Siabost*. Recreational sea anglers use rod and line methods to target sea trout, pollack and mackerel and to a lesser extent also target common ling, haddock and Atlantic cod. Sea trout are present between June-October whilst the peak season for pollack and mackerel angling is during June-September. The use of rod and line methods greatly reduces the risk of snagging within the Offshore Cable Area of Search, as such, impacts to recreational anglers is considered to be restricted to loss of access leading to displacement and disturbance effects during the O&M phase.

20.9.4.3 Impacts to recreational sea anglers during the O&M phase are considered to be less than that of construction due to the lower number of vessel trips and infrequent, short-term and spatially discrete nature of repair events which are expected to be spread out across the 35 year operational lifetime of the Project. Therefore, it is considered that there will be minimal interaction with the Offshore Project and recreational sea angling. Based on this, the magnitude of impact to recreational sea anglers is considered to be **Low (adverse)**.

Angling tour operators

20.9.4.4 As described in Section 20.8.4, the Stornoway Sea Angling Club are highlighted to fish the Offshore Development Area during the summer and autumn months weekly with up to 10 - 12 paying anglers onboard (Spiorad na Mara Ltd, 2024). Therefore, there is potential for loss of access to recreational sea angling grounds due to above sea infrastructure and safety zones around maintenance activities leading to disturbance effects during the O&M phase. Additionally, Isle of Harris Sea Tours offers bluefin tuna fishing trips from Leverburgh port/*An t-Òb* on Harris on a catch/tag/release basis. However, as the Isle of Harris Sea Tours are located outside of the Study Area it is considered that there is no potential for direct spatial overlap between the Offshore Project and this tour operator.

20.9.4.5 Loss of access due to above sea infrastructure will be permanent throughout the operational lifetime of the Project, however, will be limited to discrete spatial areas within the Turbine Area only, in line with M036 to only install above sea infrastructure within the Turbine Area. Other mitigation measures, including timely and efficient distribution of NtMs (M012), marking of all surface piercing infrastructure on Admiralty charts (M011) and production of an Offshore Environmental Management Plan (OEMP) (M019) will further reduce impacts.

20.9.4.6 Overall, impacts during the O&M phase are expected to be less than that of construction due to the lower number of vessel trips and infrequent, short-term and spatially discrete nature of repair events which are expected to be spread out across the 35 year operational lifetime of the Project. Based on this, the magnitude of impact to angling tour operators is considered to be **Low (adverse)**.

Sensitivity

Recreational sea anglers

20.9.4.7 The sensitivity of recreational sea anglers is considered to be the same as described in Section 20.8.4 and is of a **Medium** sensitivity.

Angling tour operators

20.9.4.8 The sensitivity of angling tour operators is considered to be the same as described in Section 20.8.4 and is of a **High** sensitivity.

Significance of effect

Recreational sea anglers

20.9.4.9 Based on the Low magnitude of effect and Medium sensitivity of recreational sea anglers, the overall significance of effect is determined to be **Minor (adverse)** which is **Not Significant** in EIA terms.

Angling tour operators

20.9.4.10 Based on the Low magnitude of effect and High sensitivity of angling tour operators, the overall significance of effect is determined to be **Minor (adverse)** which is **Not Significant** in EIA terms.

Further Environmental Mitigation and Residual Effect

20.9.4.11 No additional mitigation is considered necessary because the likely effect in the absence of further mitigation (beyond the embedded commitments outlined in Section 20.7.2) is not significant in EIA terms.

20.9.5 PERMANENT AMENITY EFFECTS AS A RESULT OF PERMANENT SURFACE PIERCING INFRASTRUCTURE

20.9.5.1 As per Section 20.8.5, the refined Turbine Area is located 6 km from the shore and 11 km from the South Lewis, Harris and North Uist NSA/*Siorrachd Leòdhais a Deas, na Hearadh agus Uibhist a Tuath*. Therefore, there is potential for permanent amenity effects to amenity value related to other sea users with the Offshore Project during its 35 year operational lifetime with surface piercing infrastructure, including up to 44 WTGs with a maximum blade tip height of 339 m above MSL and either one Offshore Substation Platform 90 m above MSL or one Onshore Landfall Substation up to 15 m in height. Permanent offshore lighting within the Turbine Array for navigation will also add to the potential for permanent amenity effects, particularly at night, throughout the operational phase. As per M014, marking and lighting of the Array Area will be agreed with NLB and where visibility conditions permit, the intensity of aviation warning lights may be reduced (**Table 20-12**). The maximum design scenario is presented in **Table 20-11**.

Magnitude

Other sea users and onshore tourism and recreation assets

20.9.5.2 As noted in Section 20.6.1.37, beaches and coastal scenery are one of the main attractions for tourists to the Isle of Lewis/*Eilean Leòdhais* and the Western Isles/*Na h-Eileanan Siar*, and there are a number of tourism attractions located on the west coast of the Isle of Lewis/*Eilean Leòdhais*.

20.9.5.3 As per **Chapter 18, Volume 2a**, visual effects of the Offshore Project during O&M on views along recreational routes are assessed to be the same as experienced during construction but of a long-term duration; where there is visibility the visual effects along recreational routes are Minor – Major and Significant. **Chapter 18, Volume 2a** also assesses effects on viewpoints popular with visitors,

including Barvas/*Barabhas or Barbhas* Beach, Loch na Muilne RSPB and Arnol/*Àrnoil* Blackhouse, where effects are the same as construction but of a long-term duration and are Major and Significant.

- 20.9.5.4 In addition to visual effects from above sea infrastructure during O&M, night-time visual effects are also identified within **Chapter 18, Volume 2a** where several dark sky areas are identified, such as Gallan Head/*Àird Uig* and Callanish/*Calanais* Stones on the west coast and night-time viewpoints at beaches like Barvas/*Barabhas or Barbhas* and Shawbost/*Siabost*. **Chapter 18, Volume 2a** assesses the effects of aviation and navigational lighting to be Minor – Major and Significant.
- 20.9.5.5 **Chapter 19, Volume 2a**, reports that operational noise effects for NSRs on west coast of the Isle of Lewis/*Eilean Leòdhais* would be Negligible - Minor and therefore Not Significant. Hence, noise effects during O&M are not considered further for other sea users and onshore tourism receptors.
- 20.9.5.6 Visual effects from above sea infrastructure will be permanent for the duration of the O&M of the Project, long-term (35 year lifecycle) and reversible as the Offshore Project would be decommissioned at the end of its operational life. There is the potential for direct spatial overlap within the ZTV (**Plate 20-1**) of other sea users and onshore tourism receptors. However, there is little conclusive evidence that offshore wind farms have a negative impact on tourism and recreation (Glasson et al., 2021), with 88% of coastal visitors stating that they would not avoid an area because there is an offshore wind farm visible from the shore (Scottish Government, 2021). Some studies also cite offshore wind farms may also act as a tourism attractant and provide a niche in the tourism market (Glasson et al., 2021) which would occur during the O&M phase. Therefore, the magnitude of visual effects as a result of the Offshore Project to recreation and tourism assets is considered to be **Low (adverse)**.
- 20.9.5.7 Further consideration of visual effects are assessed in **Chapter 18, Volume 2a** and impacts relating to cultural setting are assessed in **Chapter 15, Volume 2a**. Effects on the tourism sector from the Offshore Project as a whole are assessed in **Chapter 6, Volume 2a**.

Sensitivity

Other sea users and onshore tourism and recreation assets

- 20.9.5.8 The sensitivity of tourism and recreation assets and other sea users and onshore tourism and recreation assets is considered to be the same as described in Section 20.8.3 and is of a **High** sensitivity.

Significance of effect

- 20.9.5.9 Based on the Low magnitude of effect and High sensitivity of tourism and recreation assets and other sea users the overall significance of effect is determined to be **Minor (adverse)** which is **Not Significant** in EIA terms.

Further Environmental Mitigation and Residual Effect

20.9.5.10 No additional mitigation is considered necessary because the likely effect in the absence of further mitigation (beyond the embedded commitments outlined in Section 20.7.2) is not significant in EIA terms.

20.9.6 CHANGES TO HYDRODYNAMIC REGIME DUE TO PRESENCE OF OFFSHORE INFRASTRUCTURE

20.9.6.1 The presence of permanent Offshore Project infrastructure throughout the O&M phase has the potential to cause changes to the hydrodynamic regime, leading to knock-on effects to waves and currents which could affect wave resource and wave quality for surfers. Specifically, the wave height, period, direction, and local bathymetry are key to defining surfable waves. The maximum design scenario is presented in **Table 20-11**.

20.9.6.2 Impacts to physical processes are assessed in detail in **Chapter 9, Volume 2a**.

20.9.6.3 Impacts associated with onshore access to the beaches close to the Offshore Project landfall by surfers and other recreational sea users will be addressed in the Onshore EIA.

Magnitude

20.9.6.1 **Chapter 9, Volume 2a** assesses effects related to the presence of infrastructure on waves based on the Physical and Coastal Processes Modelling Results Report (**Appendix 9.2, Volume 2c**).

20.9.6.2 During the O&M phase, a decrease in wave height is seen to occur in lee of the Turbine Area. Most waves in the Offshore Project area originate from the west. The presence of the Offshore Project infrastructure resulted in a maximum absolute reduction of 0.35 m in significant wave height (Hs) of westerly waves during a (1 in 1-year) storm event. It is important to note that this represents a change in conditions in the immediate wake of the Turbine Area. This change will be all but imperceptible under normal wave conditions (i.e., not during a storm event) and with increased distance from the Turbine Area, towards the coast.

20.9.6.3 The scale of predicted change to the wave regime will be well within the limits of natural variability, and as such is unlikely to translate into a tangible change in conditions for surfers. In relation to surfable wave heights, an imperceptibly small decrease will make less relative difference to larger waves. Particularly as larger waves with longer periods make for preferable surfing conditions.

20.9.6.4 As Barvas/*Barabhas* or *Barbhas* and Rubh a Bhiogar, as a reef and point break respectively, surfing conditions at these locations are contingent on the hard substrate in those areas. The rocky reef and bathymetry surrounding the local headlands are key to creating the wave resource for surfing.

20.9.6.5 The location of the HDD Exits Pits in a water depth of -16.5 m below Lowest Astronomical Tide (LAT) will be further offshore than the breaks for these two surfing locations. Therefore, any cable protection measures laid on the seabed will not be required shoreward of the HDD Exit Pits. There will not be an overlap between the breaks and any permanent infrastructure within the Offshore

Cable Area of Search and the HDD Exit Pits; therefore, there is no opportunity for the breaks themselves to be affected by the O&M phase of the Offshore Project.

20.9.6.6 Overall, a minimal decrease in wave height is shown post-development when compared to baseline conditions. **Chapter 9, Volume 2a** assesses the magnitude of impact on waves to be Negligible based on the immediate spatial extent of wave impacts which are located within the scale of natural variability.

20.9.6.7 Current speeds and bathymetry changes also have the potential to affect wave quality. The hydrodynamic operational impact modelling indicates broadly localised changes to water depth, current speed, and bed shear stress. However, these changes are localised within the immediate vicinity of the Offshore Project (i.e., in the lee of the Turbine Area) and are indistinguishable from natural variation. Consequently, a Negligible magnitude of impacts was predicted for changes to current speeds and bathymetry as a result of permanent infrastructure presence within the Turbine Area of Offshore Cable Area of Search in **Chapter 9, Volume 2a**.

20.9.6.8 As wave impacts, current speeds and bathymetry changes due to the presence of Offshore Project infrastructure are predicted to be Negligible, any subsequent effect on wave resource or surfing quality along the west coast of the Isle of Lewis/*Eilean Leòdhais* is also considered to have a **Negligible** magnitude of impact.

Sensitivity of receptor

Surfing

20.9.6.9 The sensitivity of surfers is considered to be the same as described in Section 20.8.3 and is of a **High** sensitivity.

Significance of effect

Surfing

20.9.6.10 Based on the Negligible magnitude of effect and High sensitivity of surfing, the overall significance of effect is determined to be **Negligible** which is **Not Significant** in EIA terms.

Further Environmental Mitigation and Residual Effect

20.9.6.11 No additional mitigation is considered necessary because the likely effect in the absence of further mitigation (beyond the embedded commitments outlined in Section 20.7.2) is not significant in EIA terms.

20.10 ASSESSMENT OF EFFECTS: DECOMMISSIONING

20.10.1.1 A Decommissioning Programme will be produced for the Offshore Project in line with The Energy Act (2004) and the Scotland Act (2016). The Decommissioning Programme will follow guidance as

set out by Marine Directorate (2022) and decommissioning activities will comply with all relevant legislation at the time of decommissioning.

- 20.10.1.2 It is expected that WTGs will be removed in the reverse of the installation methods and WTG foundations will be cut 1 m below seabed level and the sections above will be removed. Vessels used during decommissioning are expected to be the same as per construction. Sections of cable may also be left in situ, however the Decommissioning Programme will be confirmed through consultation to ensure the most suitable approach is taken.

20.10.2 LOSS OF ACCESS TO AQUACULTURE SUPPORT VESSELS DURING DECOMMISSIONING

Magnitude

Multinational aquaculture companies (Bakkafrost Scotland and Loch Fyne Oysters Ltd.)

- 20.10.2.1 Given the comparable but reverse nature of decommissioning to the construction phase, it is considered that the impacts assessed for the construction phase in Section **Error! Reference source not found.** will be the same as impacts during the decommissioning phase. As such, the magnitude of effect is considered to be **Low**.

Local aquaculture companies (Uig Seafare Ltd. and Loch Carlaway Shellfish Ltd.)

- 20.10.2.2 Given the comparable but reverse nature of decommissioning to the construction phase, it is considered that the impacts assessed for the construction phase in Section **Error! Reference source not found.** will be the same as impacts during the decommissioning phase. As such, the magnitude of effect is considered to be **Low**.

Sensitivity

Multinational aquaculture companies (Bakkafrost Scotland and Loch Fyna Oysters Ltd.)

- 20.10.2.3 The sensitivity of multinational aquaculture companies is considered to be the same as described in Section **Error! Reference source not found.** and is of a **Low** sensitivity.

Local aquaculture companies (Uig Seafare Ltd. and Loch Carlaway Shellfish Ltd.)

- 20.10.2.4 The sensitivity of local aquaculture companies is considered to be the same as described in Section **Error! Reference source not found.** and is of a **High** sensitivity.

Significance of effect

Multinational aquaculture companies (Bakkafrost Scotland and Loch Fyna Oysters Ltd.)

- 20.10.2.5 Based on the Low magnitude of effect and Low sensitivity of multinational aquaculture companies, the overall significance of effect is determined to be **Negligible** which is **Not Significant** in EIA terms.

Local aquaculture companies (Uig Seafare Ltd. and Loch Carloway Shellfish Ltd.)

20.10.2.6 Based on the Low magnitude of effect and High sensitivity of local aquaculture companies, the overall significance of effect is determined to be **Minor (adverse)** which is **Not Significant** in EIA terms.

Further Environmental Mitigation and Residual Effect

20.10.2.7 No additional mitigation is considered necessary because the likely effect in the absence of further mitigation (beyond the embedded commitments outlined in Section 20.7.2) is not significant in EIA terms.

20.10.3 INCREASED DEMAND FOR PORT SERVICES DURING DECOMMISSIONING

Magnitude

Small ports

20.10.3.1 Given the comparable but reverse nature of decommissioning to the construction phase, it is considered that the impacts assessed for the construction phase in Section **Error! Reference source not found.** will be the same as impacts during the decommissioning phase. As such, the magnitude of effect is considered to be **Low**.

Stornoway port

20.10.3.2 Given the comparable but reverse nature of decommissioning to the construction phase, it is considered that the impacts assessed for the construction phase in Section **Error! Reference source not found.** will be the same as impacts during the decommissioning phase. As such, the magnitude of effect is considered to be **Low**.

Sensitivity

Small ports

20.10.3.3 The sensitivity of small ports is considered to be the same as described in Section **Error! Reference source not found.** and is of a **High** sensitivity.

Stornoway port

20.10.3.4 The sensitivity of Stornoway port is considered to be the same as described in Section **Error! Reference source not found.** and is of a **Low** sensitivity.

Significance of effect

Small ports

20.10.3.5 Based on the Low magnitude of effect and High sensitivity of small ports, the overall significance of effect is determined to be **Minor (adverse)** which is **Not Significant** in EIA terms.

Stornoway port

20.10.3.6 Based on the Low magnitude of effect and Low sensitivity of Stornoway port, the overall significance of effect is determined to be **Negligible** which is **Not Significant** in EIA terms.

Further Environmental Mitigation and Residual Effect

20.10.3.7 No additional mitigation is considered necessary because the likely effect in the absence of further mitigation (beyond the embedded commitments outlined in Section 20.7.2) is not significant in EIA terms.

20.10.4 LOSS OF ACCESS TO BOAT TOUR OPERATORS OR OTHER RECREATIONAL AND TOURISM ACTIVITIES

Magnitude

Boat tour operators

20.10.4.1 Given the comparable but reverse nature of decommissioning to the construction phase, it is considered that the impacts assessed for the construction phase in Section 20.8.3 will be the same as impacts during the decommissioning phase. As such, the magnitude of effect is considered to be **Low**.

Surfing

20.10.4.2 Given the comparable but reverse nature of decommissioning to the construction phase, it is considered that the impacts assessed for the construction phase in Section 20.8.3 will be the same as impacts during the decommissioning phase. As such, the magnitude of effect is considered to be **Low**.

Other sea users (including recreational users and tourists)

20.10.4.3 Given the comparable but reverse nature of decommissioning to the construction phase, it is considered that the impacts assessed for the construction phase in Section 20.8.3 will be the same as impacts during the decommissioning phase. As such, the magnitude of effect is considered to be **Low**.

Sensitivity

Boat tour operators

20.10.4.4 The sensitivity of boat tour operators is considered to be the same as described in Section 20.8.3 and is of a High sensitivity.

Surfing

20.10.4.5 The sensitivity of surfers is considered to be the same as described in Section 20.8.3 and is of a **High** sensitivity.

Other sea users (including recreational users and tourists)

20.10.4.6 The sensitivity of other recreation and tourism is considered to be the same as described in Section 20.8.3 and is of a **High** sensitivity.

Significance of effect

Boat tour operators

20.10.4.7 Based on the Low magnitude of effect and High sensitivity of boat tour operators, the overall significance of effect is determined to be **Minor (adverse)** which is **Not Significant** in EIA terms.

Surfing

20.10.4.8 Based on the Low magnitude of effect and High sensitivity of surfing, the overall significance of effect is determined to be **Minor (adverse)** which is **Not Significant** in EIA terms.

Other sea users (including recreational users and tourists)

20.10.4.9 Based on the Low magnitude of effect and High sensitivity of other recreation and tourism activities, the overall significance of effect is determined to be **Minor (adverse)** which is **Not Significant** in EIA terms.

Further Environmental Mitigation and Residual Effect

20.10.4.10 No additional mitigation is considered necessary because the likely effect in the absence of further mitigation (beyond the embedded commitments outlined in Section 20.7.2) is not significant in EIA terms.

20.10.5 LOSS OF ACCESS TO RECREATIONAL SEA ANGLERS AND SPECIFIC ANGLING TOUR OPERATORS

Magnitude

Recreational sea anglers

20.10.5.1 Given the comparable but reverse nature of decommissioning to the construction phase, it is considered that the impacts assessed for the construction phase in Section 20.8.4 will be the same as impacts during the decommissioning phase. As such, the magnitude of effect is considered to be **Low**.

Angling tour operators

20.10.5.2 Given the comparable but reverse nature of decommissioning to the construction phase, it is considered that the impacts assessed for the construction phase in Section 20.8.4 will be the same as impacts during the decommissioning phase. As such, the magnitude of effect is considered to be **Low**.

Sensitivity

Recreational sea anglers

20.10.5.3 The sensitivity of recreational sea anglers is considered to be the same as described in Section 20.8.4 and is of a **Medium** sensitivity.

Angling tour operators

20.10.5.4 The sensitivity of angling tour operators is considered to be the same as described in Section 20.8.4 and is of a **High** sensitivity.

Significance of effect

Recreational sea anglers

20.10.5.5 Based on the Low magnitude of effect and Medium sensitivity of recreational sea anglers, the overall significance of effect is determined to be **Minor (adverse)** which is **Not Significant** in EIA terms.

Angling tour operators

20.10.5.6 Based on the Low magnitude of effect and High sensitivity of angling tour operators, the overall significance of effect is determined to be **Minor (adverse)** which is **Not Significant** in EIA terms.

Further Environmental Mitigation and Residual Effect

20.10.5.7 No additional mitigation is considered necessary because the likely effect in the absence of further mitigation (beyond the embedded commitments outlined in Section 20.7.2) is not significant in EIA terms.

20.10.6 AMENITY EFFECTS AS A RESULT OF DECOMMISSIONING ACTIVITIES

Magnitude

Other sea users and onshore tourism and recreation assets

20.10.6.1 It is expected that WTGs will be removed in the reverse of the installation methods and WTG foundations will be cut 1 m below seabed level and the sections above will be removed. Vessels used during decommissioning are expected to be the same as per construction. A Decommissioning Programme will be produced for the Offshore Project and confirmed through consultation to ensure the most suitable approach is taken.

20.10.6.2 Given the comparable but reverse nature of decommissioning to the construction phase, it is considered that the magnitude of effect will be the same as impacts during the construction phase assessed in Section 20.8.5 and is therefore considered to be **Low**.

20.10.6.3 However, upon completion of the decommissioning phase all above sea infrastructure will be removed thus reversing the amenity effects of the Offshore Project. Upon completion of the decommissioning phase the magnitude is therefore considered to be **Negligible**.

Sensitivity

Other sea users and onshore tourism and recreation assets

20.10.6.4 The sensitivity of tourism assets and other sea users and onshore tourism and recreation assets is considered to be the same as described in Section 20.8.3 and is of a **High** sensitivity.

Significance of effect

20.10.6.5 Based on the Low magnitude of effect during decommissioning activities and High sensitivity of other sea users the overall significance of effect is determined to be **Minor (adverse)** which is **Not Significant** in EIA terms.

20.10.6.6 Upon completion of decommissioning, the Negligible magnitude of effect and High sensitivity equates to an overall **Negligible** significance of effect which is **Not Significant** in EIA terms.

Further Environmental Mitigation and Residual Effect

20.10.6.7 No additional mitigation is considered necessary because the likely effect in the absence of further mitigation (beyond the embedded commitments outlined in Section 20.7.2) is not significant in EIA terms.

20.11 ASSESSMENT OF COMBINED EFFECTS

20.11.1.1 The combined effects assessment considers likely significant effects from multiple impacts and activities from the construction, operation and maintenance, and decommissioning phases of the Offshore Project on the same receptor, or group of receptors. The overall method following in identifying and assessing potential Combined Effects in relation to the offshore environment is set out in **Chapter 5, Volume 1a**.

20.11.1.2 Combined effects could potentially arise in one of two ways. The first type of combined effect is a Project lifetime effect, where multiple phases of the Project (construction, operation and maintenance, and decommissioning) interact to create a potentially more significant effect on a receptor than in one phase alone.

20.11.1.3 The second type of combined effect is receptor-led effects. Receptor-led effects are where effects from different environmental aspects combine spatially and temporally on a receptor. These effects may be short-term, temporary, transient, or longer-term.

20.11.1.4 Receptor-led effects have been considered, where relevant, in this chapter for potential interactions between Other Sea Users and Recreation and the following environmental aspects:

- **Chapter 16: Shipping and Navigation, Volume 2a;**
- **Chapter 18: Seascape, Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Volume 2a;** and
- **Chapter 21: Commercial Fisheries, Volume 2a.**

20.11.1.5 Full results of the Project lifetime effects and receptor-led effects assessment can be found in **Chapter 23: Combined Effects Assessment, Volume 2a.**

20.12 CONSIDERATION OF ONSHORE TRANSMISSION WORKS PROJECT

- 20.12.1.1 A separate application for the Project’s onshore elements (the OTW Project) that includes all infrastructure landwards of Mean Low Water Springs (MLWS) within the Onshore Transmission Works Boundary will be made, under the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 to Comhairle nan Eilean Siar (CnES). The OTW Project EIAR will provide a full description of the onshore elements of the Project landward of MLWS, and include an assessment of the associated likely significant effects.
- 20.12.1.2 This EIAR has considered the additive interactions between the Offshore Project and OTW Project to understand if there is the potential for any change to the assessment outcomes as a result of both elements of the Project. The approach to identify and consider potential interactions between the Offshore Project and OTW Project is set out in **Chapter 5, Volume 1a** and key design parameters associated with the OTW Project are summarised in **Chapter 3, Volume 1a.**
- 20.12.1.3 The potential for effects identified in **Table 20-13** to interact with effects associated with the OTW Project at a common receptor has been considered for Other Sea Users and Recreation. **Table 20-13** provides a summary the pathways considered in this chapter and the potential for interaction. Where required, this table provides the relevant MDS information for the OTW Project that has been used to inform this assessment.

Table 20-13 Summary of Other Sea Users and Recreation pathways and potential for interaction with the OTW Project

Assessment pathways considered and receptors	Maximum Design Scenario
Construction	
<i>Amenity effects as a result of construction of the Offshore Project and OTW Project to other sea users and onshore tourism and recreation assets</i>	<p><u>Offshore Project</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - See MDS table (Table 20-11) <p><u>OTW Project</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The total anticipated construction period for each onshore substation is around 36 months and the total expected duration of construction works relating to the cable route is 2-3 years. It is anticipated that the OTW Project construction will take up to 5 years. <p>Landfall</p>

Assessment pathways considered and receptors	Maximum Design Scenario
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Up to 13 Horizontal Directional Drilling (HDD) entry points near a coastal cliff at Barvas / <i>Barabhas</i> (Scenario 2) - Transition Joint Bays (TJBs) - An onshore temporary construction HDD compound (approximately 465 m x 480 m) and access road to connect to the A857 - Up to 12 circuits of buried Onshore Cables will connect from the TJBs to the Landfall Substation located near Barvas / <i>Barabhas</i> or <i>Barbhas</i> (Scenario 2). <p>Landfall Substation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Construction of a Landfall Substation (Scenario 2) with a platform of approximately 150 m by 150 m and a maximum height of 15 m, plus several other, smaller buildings housing electrical and other equipment. - Within the site compound, there will also be safety features such as lightning masts and access paths/roads. <p>Grid Substation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Grid Substation to be constructed northwest of Loch Cnoc a'Choilich, consisting of up to 6 buildings in total, with a maximum height of 20 m, plus a number of other, smaller buildings housing electrical and other equipment. <p>Onshore Cable Route</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 2 circuits of 275 kV cables to connect from the Grid Substation to the SSEN Lewis Hub. Onshore Cables to be buried. - Open cut trenching to be the primary installation method, however 12 locations have been identified where trenchless crossing installations are anticipated.
<p><i>Loss of access resulting in displacement/disturbance effects during construction of the Offshore Project and OTW Project to other recreational and tourism activities</i></p>	<p><u>Offshore Project</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - See MDS table (Table 20-11) <p><u>OTW Project</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The total anticipated construction period for each onshore substation is around 36 months and the total expected duration of construction works relating to the cable route is 2-3 years. It is anticipated that the OTW Project construction will take up to 5 years. <p>Landfall</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Up to 13 HDD entry points near a coastal cliff at Barvas / <i>Barabhas</i> (Scenario 2) - TJBs - An onshore temporary construction HDD compound (approximately 465 m x 480 m) and access road to connect to the A857

Assessment pathways considered and receptors	Maximum Design Scenario
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Up to 12 circuits of buried Onshore Cables will connect from the TJBs to the Landfall Substation located near Barvas / <i>Barabhas</i> or <i>Barbhas</i> (Scenario 2). <p>Landfall Substation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Construction of a Landfall Substation with a platform of approximately 150 m by 150 m and a maximum height of 15m, plus several other, smaller buildings housing electrical and other equipment. - Within the site compound, there will also be safety features such as lightning masts and access paths/roads. - Permanent access road to the substation from the A857 <p>Grid Substation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Grid Substation to be constructed northwest of Loch Cnoc a'Choilich, consisting of up to 6 buildings in total, with a maximum height of 20 m, plus a number of other, smaller buildings housing electrical and other equipment. <p>Onshore Cable Route</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 2 circuits of 275 kV cables to connect from the Grid Substation to the SSEN Lewis Hub. Onshore Cables to be buried. - Open cut trenching to be the primary installation method, however 12 locations have been identified where trenchless crossing installations are anticipated. - Haul road to enable construction of the Onshore Cables. This road will be either removed and the land re-instated or transformed into a multi-use pathway post construction of the Onshore Cables.
<p><i>Increased demand on port services as a result of additional workforce associated with the Offshore Project and OTW Project during construction</i></p>	<p><u>Offshore Project</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - See MDS table (Table 20-11) - Assumed that fabrication of Offshore Project elements will primarily take place both off-site and on Offshore Project vessels during installation - Assumed that the majority of the offshore workforce will be accommodated onboard vessels <p><u>OTW Project</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Construction employment associated with Landfall Substation (Scenario 2) and Grid Substation
<p>Operation and maintenance</p>	
<p><i>Permanent amenity effects as a result of permanent installed Offshore Project and OTW Project infrastructure to other sea</i></p>	<p><u>Offshore Project</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - See MDS table (Table 20-11) <p><u>OTW Project</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Operational lifetime up to 35 years

Assessment pathways considered and receptors	Maximum Design Scenario
<i>users and onshore tourism and recreation assets</i>	<p>Landfall Substation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Landfall Substation (Scenario 2) with a platform of approximately 150 m by 150 m and a maximum height of 15 m, plus several other, smaller buildings housing electrical and other equipment. <p>Grid Substation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Grid Substation northwest of Loch Cnoc a'Choilich, consisting of up to 6 buildings in total, with a maximum height of 20 m, plus a number of other, smaller buildings housing electrical and other equipment.
<i>Loss of access resulting in displacement/disturbance effects during O&M of the Offshore Project and OTW Project to other recreational and tourism activities</i>	<p><u>Offshore Project</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - See MDS table (Table 20-11) <p><u>OTW Project</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Operational lifetime up to 35 years - Potential use of haul road as multi-use pathway. <p>Landfall Substation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Landfall Substation (Scenario 2) with a platform of approximately 150 m by 150 m and a maximum height of 15 m, plus several other, smaller buildings housing electrical and other equipment. <p>Grid Substation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Grid Substation northwest of Loch Cnoc a'Choilich, consisting of up to 6 buildings in total, with a maximum height of 20 m, plus a number of other, smaller buildings housing electrical and other equipment.
<i>Increased demand on port services as a result of additional workforce associated with the Offshore and OTW Project during O&M</i>	<p><u>Offshore Project</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - See MDS table (Table 20-11) <p><u>OTW Project</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Operational employment associated with Landfall Substation (Scenario 2) and Grid Substation
Decommissioning	
<i>Amenity effects as a result of decommissioning of the Offshore Project and OTW Project to other sea users and onshore tourism and recreation assets</i>	Considered to be as per Construction
<i>Loss of access resulting in displacement/disturbance effects during decommissioning of the</i>	Considered to be as per Construction

Assessment pathways considered and receptors	Maximum Design Scenario
<i>Offshore Project and OTW Project to other recreational and tourism activities</i>	
<i>Increased demand on port services as a result of additional workforce associated with the Offshore Project and OTW Project during decommissioning</i>	Considered to be as per Construction

Construction

Amenity effects as a result of construction of the Offshore Project and OTW Project

- 20.12.1.4 Other Sea Users and Onshore Tourism and Recreation assets have the potential to be affected by visual and noise effects arising from both the Offshore Project and OTW Project during construction. As much of the tourism and recreation activity is associated on the west coast of the Isle of Lewis/ *Eilean Leòdhais* (**Plate 20-3** and **Plate 20-4**), the Array Area in combination with the Landfall Substation, located northeast of Barvas/*Barabhas*, poses the greatest potential for combined visual and noise effects during construction as there is direct overlap with the ZTV presented in **Plate 20-1**.
- 20.12.1.5 As noted in Section 20.8.5, **Chapter 18, Volume 2a** considers visual effects arising from the Offshore Project to be short-term and Minor – Major and Significant for views experienced by people and tourists travelling on recreational routes and for viewpoints popular with visitors.
- 20.12.1.6 With the production of an Offshore Airborne Piling Noise Management Plan post-consent, residual noise effects from piling to NSRs are assessed to be Minor and Not Significant within **Chapter 19, Volume 2a**.
- 20.12.1.7 Amenity effects to other sea users and onshore tourism and recreation assets as a result of the Offshore Project alone are assessed as Minor and Not Significant in EIA terms (Section 20.8.5). The Landfall Substation also falls within the ZTV considered within this assessment (**Plate 20-1**). However, as the Offshore Project is the dominant contributor to visual and noise effects due to the scale, height and offshore extent of the array plus associated noise produced during piling activities, it is not anticipated that the OTW Project will result in a material increase in magnitude of impact of amenity effects. As a result, although the Landfall Substation is visible within the ZTV, the significance of the cumulative effects of the Offshore Project in combination with the OTW Project in terms of amenity effects during the construction phase remains unchanged from the assessment

of the Offshore Project alone (Section 20.8.5) and is considered **Minor (adverse)**, which is **Not Significant** in EIA terms.

Loss of access resulting in displacement/disturbance effects during construction of the Offshore Project and OTW Project

- 20.12.1.8 There is potential for temporary loss of access resulting in displacement/disturbance effects to other recreational and tourism activities during construction of the Offshore Project and OTW Project.
- 20.12.1.9 The Barvas/*Barabhas* Hatchery is based within the Barvas Estate in Arnol/*Àrnoil* and is used for freshwater Atlantic salmon. As the hatchery is located outside of the Offshore Project development area it is considered that there is no potential for impacts to the Barvas/*Barabhas* Hatchery from the construction and operation of the Offshore Project as there is no spatial overlap and hence there is no potential for cumulative effects of the Offshore Project in combination with the OTW Project to the Barvas/*Barabhas* Hatchery.
- 20.12.1.10 The tourism season on the Isle of Lewis/*Eilean Leòdhais* generally lasts 7 - 8 months, with the peak months occurring between April – October. Although it is anticipated that the OTW Project construction period will take up to 5 years, construction of individual onshore substations is expected to be around 36 months per substation, where access restrictions will be localised, temporary and phased, and will not occur concurrently across the full extent of the west coast. Recreational and tourism activity is concentrated primarily within 5 km of the coastline, particularly around beaches such as Barvas/*Barabhas* and Bru/*Brù* and Arnol/*Àrnoil* beach which are within 2 km of the Offshore Cable Area of Search and Landfall located northeast of Barvas/*Barabhas*.
- 20.12.1.11 Embedded mitigation measures for the Offshore Project such as the timely and efficient distribution of NtMs (M012), marking of all Project infrastructure on UKHO Admiralty Charts (M011), alongside adherence to the OEMP (M019) are considered to reduce the magnitude of effect of temporary displacement/disturbance to other recreational and tourism activities from the Offshore Project alone to be **Minor (adverse)** which is **Not Significant** in EIA terms (Section 20.8.3).
- 20.12.1.12 The significance of the cumulative effects of the Offshore Project in combination with the OTW Project on other sea users and onshore recreational and tourism receptors are considered to be localised, short-term and temporary in duration. Although OTW Project construction activities overlap with peak tourism months, phasing and spatial separation of works, together with access management measures, are expected to avoid prolonged or widespread disruption.
- 20.12.1.13 As such, the magnitude of impact for temporary loss of access resulting in displacement/disturbance effects to other recreational and tourism activities during the construction of the Offshore Project in addition with the OTW project is assessed as **Minor (adverse)**, which is **Not Significant** in EIA terms.

Increased demand for port services as a result of additional workforce associated with the Offshore Project and OTW Project during construction

- 20.12.1.14 There is potential for increased demand on port services associated with the construction of the Offshore Project in combination with the OTW Project as a result of the additional workforce which may put pressure on ferry services to the Isle of Lewis/*Eilean Leòdhais*, particularly on the main Ullapool – Stornoway route, usually served by the MV Loch Seaforth ferry (**Plate 20-3**). As the main port on the Isle of Lewis/*Eilean Leòdhais* is located at Stornoway/*Steòrnabhagh*, this will be the Common Receptor between the Offshore Project and OTW Project.
- 20.12.1.15 During construction, it is anticipated that fabrication of Offshore Project elements will primarily take place both off-site and on Offshore Project vessels in line with embedded mitigation (M041). Furthermore, it is also anticipated that the majority of the offshore workforce will be accommodated onboard vessels, limiting additional port service requirements during construction by the Offshore Project (M041). If required, it is expected that minor ports northeast of the Array Area will be utilised on an ad hoc and infrequent basis during the construction phase by installation vessels and CTVs. In line with embedded mitigation (M042) the Project will work with key stakeholders and service providers to understand pressure points on existing services and on storage / port facilities on Lewis, and charter vessels and/or flights to transport crew and materials where required to avoid creating excess pressure, and potentially provide additional capacity. If required, large construction components may be transported by specialist vessels via private charter. The Project will also engage with other developers on opportunities to collaborate on transport services and storage facilities, including through the Renewable Energy Major Developments Forum.
- 20.12.1.16 Following the inclusion of mitigation measures, and consideration of Section 20.8.2 it is considered that increased demand on port services as a result of additional workforce that effects the Common Receptor is **Negligible** for the Offshore Project alone, which is **Not Significant** in EIA terms.
- 20.12.1.17 During construction, it is expected the in-coming workforce associated with the OTW Project would require transport to Lewis/*Eilean Leòdhais* potentially contributing to increased port services where ferries are required. Any increased demand on port services from the OTW Project workforce would be temporary over the onshore construction period of up to 5 years.
- 20.12.1.18 The Project will aim to utilise the local supply chain and workforce where possible to reduce workforce numbers commuting to the Isle of Lewis/*Eilean Leòdhais*, largely via the main Ullapool – Stornoway ferry route. As the number of incoming construction workers associated with the OTW Project would represent a relatively small proportion of the overall population, it is not expected that this would result in a significant increase in port services from increased ferry capacity. Furthermore, it is expected that the additional port capacity provided by the Stornoway Deep

Water Terminal constructed in 2024 will support the growing port capacity which continues to hit record passenger arrivals, projected to be over 60,000 in 2025 (Cruise Scotland, 2025).

- 20.12.1.19 Accommodation and potential beneficial economic and socio-economic impacts during the construction phase, and supply chain opportunities are considered in **Chapter 6, Volume 2a**.
- 20.12.1.20 Based on the above, the significance of the cumulative effects of the Offshore Project in combination with the OTW Project for increased demand on port services as a result of additional workforce during the construction phase is expected to be slightly greater than the effects of the Offshore Project alone. However, it is considered that the magnitude of impact will be mitigated by the availability of the Stornoway Deep Water Terminal as well as M041 in a scenario where peak OTW workforce numbers may coincide with peak Offshore Project construction activity. These measures reduce the likelihood of sustained pressure on ferry services or port infrastructure. As such, the magnitude of impact for increased demand on port services as a result of additional workforce during the construction of the Offshore Project in addition with the OTW project is assessed as **Minor (adverse)**, which is **Not Significant** in EIA terms.

Operation and Maintenance

Permanent amenity effects as a result of permanent installed Offshore and Onshore Project infrastructure

- 20.12.1.21 Other sea users and onshore tourism and recreation assets have the potential to be affected by visual and noise effects arising from permanent installed Offshore Project and OTW Project infrastructure during O&M. No permanent visual or noise effects are expected to arise from the onshore cable during O&M as it will be buried and trenched areas will be restored. Therefore, permanent visual effects are only considered for the Array Area in combination with the Landfall Substation, as these elements are considered to pose the greatest potential for combined visual effects to other sea users and onshore tourism and recreation assets on the west coast of the Isle of Lewis/ *Eilean Leòdhais* (**Plate 20-3** and **Plate 20-4**) within the ZTV presented in **Plate 20-1**.
- 20.12.1.22 **Chapter 18, Volume 2a** assesses the significance of the cumulative effects of the Offshore Project in combination with the OTW Project in terms of visual receptors and views. The level of anticipated visual impact from the OTW Project on both residents and visitors at viewpoints along the west coast of the Isle of Lewis/ *Eilean Leòdhais* is expected to be none (no effect) during O&M due to the screening at the Landfall Substation. Therefore, visual effects as a result of the Offshore Project in combination with the OTW Project are considered to be no greater than that of the Offshore Project alone and are assessed as Major and Significant in EIA terms in **Chapter 18, Volume 2a**.
- 20.12.1.23 **Chapter 19, Volume 2a**, concludes that the significance of the cumulative effects of the Offshore Project in combination with the OTW project in terms of airborne noise effects during O&M is expected to be no greater than the effects of the Offshore Project alone.
- 20.12.1.24 Permanent amenity effects to other sea users and onshore tourism and recreation assets as a result of the Offshore Project alone are assessed as Minor and Not Significant in EIA terms (Section

20.9.5). The Landfall Substation also falls within the ZTV considered within this assessment (**Plate 20-1**). However, as the Offshore Project is the dominant contributor to visual and noise effects due to the scale, height and offshore extent of the array, it is not anticipated that the OTW Project will result in a material increase in magnitude of impact of amenity effects. As a result, although the Landfall Substation is also visible within the ZTV, the significance of the cumulative effects of the Offshore Project in combination with the OTW Project in terms of amenity effects during O&M remains unchanged from the assessment of the Offshore Project alone (Section 20.9.5) and is considered **Minor (adverse)**, which is **Not Significant** in EIA terms.

Loss of access resulting in displacement/disturbance effects during O&M of the Offshore Project and OTW Project

- 20.12.1.25 There is potential for loss of access resulting in displacement/disturbance to other recreational and tourism activities during O&M of the Offshore Project and OTW Project due to the presence of safety zones and physical infrastructure located at the Landfall Substation northeast of Barvas/*Barabhas*. As outlined in Section 20.12.1.8, loss of access resulting in displacement/disturbance effects to other recreational and tourism activities is only considered on the west coast of the Isle of Lewis/*Eilean Leòdhais* for this assessment.
- 20.12.1.26 At its closest point the Array Area is 5 km from the coastline. Given that recreational and tourism activities usually occur within 5 km of the coastline and no above sea infrastructure will be located in the Offshore Cable Area of Search, it is considered that any loss of access from the Offshore Project will be due to safety zones during O&M which will be temporary and intermittent throughout the 35 year operational lifetime of the Project. For the Offshore Project alone, loss of access resulting in displacement/disturbance effects to other recreational and tourism activities during O&M is therefore considered to be less than that of the construction phase and is assessed as **Negligible** which is **Not Significant** in EIA terms (Section 20.9.3).
- 20.12.1.27 Loss of access during O&M at the Landfall will be less than that of construction due to the removal of temporary construction compounds. Although access restrictions associated with permanent infrastructure will remain for the operational lifetime of the OTW Project, these will be highly localised and confined to the immediate footprint of the OTW. It is proposed that parts of the haul route created during construction of the OTW Project will be converted to a new Multiuse Pathway connecting Barvas/*Barabhas* with Stornonway/*Steòrnabhagh*. The Multiuse Pathway would enhance local travel infrastructure for recreational local and visiting walkers and cyclists and improve connectivity between Stornonway/*Steòrnabhagh* and the west coast.
- 20.12.1.28 In consideration of the potential beneficial impacts from the provision of a new Multiuse Pathway and overall reduction in loss of access compared to construction for the OTW Project during O&M, the magnitude of impact for loss of access resulting in displacement/disturbance effects to other recreational and tourism activities during O&M of the Offshore Project in addition with the OTW project is assessed as **Negligible**, which is **Not Significant** in EIA terms.

Increased demand on port services as a result of additional workforce associated with the Offshore and Onshore Project during O&M

- 20.12.1.29 During O&M there is potential for increased demand on port services at Stornoway/*Steòrnabhagh* (Common Receptor) associated with the Project. Additional workforce required during O&M may also put pressure on ferry services to the Isle of Lewis/*Eilean Leòdhais*, particularly on the main Ullapool – Stornoway route, although workforce numbers are expected to be less than those experienced during construction and spread over the 35 year operational lifetime of the Project.
- 20.12.1.30 Following the inclusion of mitigation measures outlined above in Section 20.12.1.14, and consideration of Section 20.9.2 it is considered that permanent impacts on the Common Receptor is **Negligible** for the Offshore Project alone, which is **Not Significant** in EIA terms.
- 20.12.1.31 As workforce numbers are expected to be less than those experienced during construction and will be spread over the 35 year operational lifetime of the Project, the significance of the cumulative effects of the Offshore Project in combination with the OTW Project for increased demand to Stornoway/*Steòrnabhagh* port during O&M are expected to be less than those experienced during construction. Given the existing infrastructure to accommodate growing port capacity at Stornoway/*Steòrnabhagh*, the magnitude of impact for increased demand to port services to the Common Receptor during O&M of the Offshore Project in addition with the OTW project is assessed as **Negligible**, which is **Not Significant** in EIA terms.

Decommissioning

Amenity effects as a result of decommissioning of the Offshore Project and OTW Project

- 20.12.1.32 It is expected that WTGs will be removed in the reverse of the installation methods and WTG foundations will be cut 1 m below seabed level and the sections above will be removed. Vessels used during decommissioning are expected to be the same as per construction. A Decommissioning Programme will be produced for the Offshore Project and confirmed through consultation to ensure the most suitable approach is taken.
- 20.12.1.33 Given the comparable but reverse nature of decommissioning to the construction phase, it is considered that the significance of the cumulative effects of the Offshore Project in combination with the OTW Project in terms of amenity effects in Section 20.12.1.4 will be the same as impacts during the construction phase. Amenity effects during the decommissioning phase are therefore assessed as **Minor (adverse)** which is **Not Significant** in EIA terms.
- 20.12.1.34 However, upon completion of the decommissioning phase it is acknowledged that all above sea and visible infrastructure will be removed thus reversing the visual impacts of the Offshore Project.

Loss of access resulting in displacement/disturbance effects during decommissioning of the Offshore Project and OTW Project

- 20.12.1.35 Given the comparable but reverse nature of decommissioning to the construction phase, it is considered that the significance of the cumulative effects of the Offshore Project in combination

with the OTW Project in terms of loss of access resulting in displacement/disturbance effects to other recreation and tourism activities in Section 20.12.1.8 will be the same as impacts during the construction phase. Loss of access during the decommissioning phase is therefore assessed as **Minor (adverse)** which is **Not Significant** in EIA terms.

20.12.1.36 However, upon completion of the decommissioning phase it is acknowledged that all above sea and physical infrastructure will be removed thus reversing any loss of access by the Offshore Project.

Increased demand on port services as a result of additional workforce associated with the Offshore Project and OTW Project during decommissioning

20.12.1.37 Given the comparable but reverse nature of decommissioning to the construction phase, it is considered that the significance of the cumulative effects of the Offshore Project in combination with the OTW Project in terms of increased demand on Stornoway/Steòrnabhagh port as a result of additional workforce associated with the Offshore Project and OTW Project in Section 20.12.1.14 will be the same as impacts during the construction phase. Increased demand on port services during the decommissioning phase is therefore assessed as **Minor (adverse)** which is **Not Significant** in EIA terms.

20.13 ASSESSMENT OF CUMULATIVE EFFECTS

20.13.1 APPROACH

20.13.1.1 A cumulative effects assessment (CEA) examines the potential for impacts of the Offshore Project in addition with 'Other Developments' (including the OTW Project), on the same single receptor or resource and the contribution of the Offshore Project to those impacts. The overall method following in identifying and assessing potential cumulative effects in relation to the offshore environment is set out in **Chapter 5, Volume 1a**.

20.13.1.2 The offshore screening approach is based on the Planning Inspectorate's Advice Note Nine (Planning Inspectorate, 2018) and Advice Note Seventeen (Planning Inspectorate, 2024), with relevant components of the RenewableUK (RenewableUK, 2013) accepted guidance, which includes aspects specific to the marine elements of an offshore wind farm, addressing the need to consider mobile wide-ranging species (foraging species, migratory routes etc).

20.13.1.3 The screening approach is based on the professional guidance and best practice.

20.13.1.4 The conclusions of the assessment of the Offshore Project and any additional effect arising from the OTW Project as identified in this chapter have been considered in this CEA.

20.13.2 CUMULATIVE EFFECTS ASSESSMENT

- 20.13.2.1 For Other Sea Users and Recreation, a Zone of Influence (ZOI) has been applied to ensure direct and indirect cumulative effects can be appropriately identified and assessed. The ZOI as identified within this chapter is determined by the Study Area, which encompasses the Array Area and Offshore Cable Area of Search plus a 1 km buffer surrounding the Offshore Project, plus a ZTV covering a 60 km radius from the Offshore Project to encompass an area for potential visual effects (**Plate 20-1**). As such, only plans or projects with potential to overlap the Study Area and/or ZTV either spatially or temporally will be included in the CEA. The Other Sea Users and Recreation ZOI is shown in **Plate 20-1**.
- 20.13.2.2 A short list of Other Developments that may interact with the Project ZOIs during their construction, operation, or decommissioning is presented in **Appendix 5.3: Cumulative Effects Assessment Detailed Search and Screening Criteria, Volume 1c**. This list has been generated applying criteria set out in **Chapter 5, Volume 1a** and **Appendix 5.3, Volume 1c** and has been collated up to the finalisation of the EIA through desk study, consultation, and engagement.
- 20.13.2.3 Only those 'other developments' in the short list that fall within the Other Sea Users and Recreation ZOI have the potential to result in cumulative effects with the Offshore Project on Other Sea Users and Recreation. All 'other developments' falling outside the Other Sea Users and Recreation ZOI are excluded from this assessment. The following types of 'other development' have the potential to result in cumulative effects on Other Sea Users and Recreation:
- Other offshore wind farms;
 - Oil and gas platforms;
 - Subsea cables and pipelines;
 - Other developments which have the potential to alter the marine environment.
- 20.13.2.4 On the basis of the above, 'no other developments' are identified within the Study Area, it is considered that there is no pathway for spatial or temporal overlap for combined disruption/disturbance impacts from the Offshore Project in combination with 'other developments' on receptors of Other Sea Users and Recreation. Combined disruption/disturbance impacts are therefore scoped out of the Cumulative Effects Assessment (CEA).
- 20.13.2.5 'Other developments' are however identified within the ZTV; therefore, it is considered that there is a pathway for spatial or temporal overlap for combined amenity effects of the Offshore Project in combination with the OTW Project and 'other developments' on receptors of Other Sea Users and Recreation. Cumulative visual effects are considered and assessed in **Chapter 18, Volume 2a**, which concludes No Significant residual cumulative effects to view points, coastal character or landscape character. As such it is considered that there are **No Significant cumulative effects** to Other Sea Users and Recreation visual receptors and amenity effects throughout the construction, O&M and decommissioning phases of the Offshore Project.

20.14 TRANSBOUNDARY EFFECTS

- 20.14.1.1 Transboundary effects occur when a development in one European Economic Area (EEA) State impacts the environment of another EEA State(s). A screening of potential transboundary effects was undertaken within the Scoping Report.
- 20.14.1.2 No potential for transboundary effects were identified during Scoping and as such transboundary effects remain scoped out.
- 20.14.1.3 No EEA states are located within the Study Area and all receptors and impacts in relation to Other Sea Users and Recreation are located within the Outer Hebrides/*Na h-Eileanan Siar* and Scottish region. Therefore, there is no pathway for transboundary effects to occur and transboundary effects are not considered further within the assessment of Other Sea Users and Recreation.

20.15 SUMMARY OF RESIDUAL EFFECTS

- 20.15.1.1 **Table 20-14** presents a summary of the assessment of significant impacts, any relevant mitigation measures, and residual effects on Other Sea Users and Recreation receptors.

Table 20-14 Summary of residual effects for Other Sea Users and Recreation

Activity and Impact	Receptor	Magnitude of Impact	Sensitivity	Embedded Mitigation	Significance of Effect	Further Environmental Mitigation	Assessment of Residual Effect (significance)
Construction and Decommissioning							
Loss of access to aquaculture support vessels due to the presence of installation safety zones and construction activities	Multinational aquaculture companies	Low	Low	M019, M011, M012, M013, M015, M020	Negligible	N/A	Negligible
	Local aquaculture companies	Low	High		Minor (Not Significant)		Minor (Not Significant)
Increased demand for port services during construction	Small ports	Low	High	M019, M012, M013, M015, M020	Minor (Not Significant)	N/A	Minor (Not Significant)
	Stornoway port	Low	Low		Negligible		Negligible
Loss of access to boat tour routes and other sea users due to installation safety zones and construction activities	Boat tour operators	Low	High	M019, M011, M012, M013, M015, M020, M037	Minor (Not Significant)	N/A	Minor (Not Significant)
	Surfing	Low	High		Minor (Not Significant)		Negligible
	Other sea users	Low	High		Minor (Not Significant)		Minor (Not Significant)
Loss of access to recreational sea	Recreational sea angling	Low	Medium	M019, M028, M011, M012,	Minor (Not Significant)	N/A	Minor (Not Significant)

Activity and Impact	Receptor	Magnitude of Impact	Sensitivity	Embedded Mitigation	Significance of Effect	Further Environmental Mitigation	Assessment of Residual Effect (significance)
anglers and specific angling tour operators due to the presence of installation safety zones and construction activities	Angling tour operators	Low	High	M013, M015, M020	Minor (Not Significant)		Minor (Not Significant)
Amenity effects as a result of construction activities	Other sea users and onshore tourism and recreation assets	High	High	M014, M015, M020, M032, M036	Minor (Not Significant)	N/A	Minor (Not Significant)
Operation and maintenance							
Loss of access to aquaculture support vessels due to the presence of surface piercing infrastructure and O&M activities	Multinational aquaculture companies	Low	Low	M011, M012, M013, M015, M025	Negligible	N/A	Negligible
	Local aquaculture companies	Low	High		Minor (Not Significant)		Minor (Not Significant)
	Small ports	Low	High	M012, M013, M015, M025	Minor (Not Significant)	N/A	Minor (Not Significant)

Activity and Impact	Receptor	Magnitude of Impact	Sensitivity	Embedded Mitigation	Significance of Effect	Further Environmental Mitigation	Assessment of Residual Effect (significance)
Increased demand for port services during O&M	Stornoway port	Low	Low		Negligible		Negligible
Loss of access to boat tour routes and other sea users due to the presence of surface piercing infrastructure and O&M activities	Boat tour operators	Low	High	M011, M012, M013, M015, M025, M037	Minor (Not Significant)	N/A	Minor (Not Significant)
	Surfing	Low	High		Minor (Not Significant)		Negligible
	Other sea users	Low	High		Minor (Not Significant)		Minor (Not Significant)
Loss of access to recreational sea anglers and specific angling tour operators due to the presence of surface piercing infrastructure and O&M activities	Recreational sea angling	Low	Medium	M028, M011, M012, M013, M015, M025	Minor (Not Significant)	N/A	Minor (Not Significant)
	Angling tour operators	Low	High		Minor (Not Significant)		Minor (Not Significant)
Permanent amenity effects as a result of permanent installed infrastructure	Other sea users and onshore tourism and recreation assets	High	High	M014, M015, M025, M032, M036	Minor (Not Significant)	N/A	Minor (Not Significant)

Activity and Impact	Receptor	Magnitude of Impact	Sensitivity	Embedded Mitigation	Significance of Effect	Further Environmental Mitigation	Assessment of Residual Effect (significance)
Changes to hydrodynamic regime due to presence of Offshore Project infrastructure	Surfers	Negligible	High	M011, M012, M013, M015, M025	Negligible (Not Significant)	N/A	Negligible (Not Significant)

20.16 GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

20.16.1.1 A list of key terms and acronyms used in this chapter are provided in **Table 20-15** and **Table 20-16**.

Table 20-15 Acronyms and abbreviations

Term	Definition
AIS	Automatic Identification System
CEA	Cumulative Effects Assessment
CFLO	Company Fisheries Liaison Officer
CnES	Comhairle nan Eilean Siar
CTV	Crew Transfer Vessel
EEA	European Economic Area
EIAR	Environmental Impact Assessment Report
EMODnet	European Marine Observation and Data Network
FIR	Fishing Industry Representative
GIS	Geographical Information System
GVA	Gross Value Added
HDD	Horizontal Directional Drilling
HGV	Heavy Goods Vehicle
LAT	Lowest Astronomical Tide
MD-LOT	Marine Directorate - Licensing Operations Team
MDS	Maximum Design Scenario
MMO	Marine Management Organisation
MSL	Mean Seal Level
MLWS	Mean Low Water Springs
NRA	Navigational Risk Assessment
NSA	National Scenic Area
NtMs	Notices to Mariners
NSR	Noise Sensitive Receptors
O&M	Operation and Maintenance
OCAS	Offshore Cable Area of Search
OEMP	Offshore Environmental Management Plan
OFLO	Offshore Fisheries Liaison Officer
OSP	Offshore Substation Platform
OTW	Onshore Transmission Works
PAC	Preliminary Application Consultation
RSPB	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
RYA	Royal Yachting Association
SAS	Surfers Against Sewage
TJB	Transition Joint Bay
MD-SEDD	Marine Directorate - Science, Evidence, Data and Digital

Term	Definition
WTG	Wind Turbine Generator
ZOI	Zone of Influence
ZTV	Zone of Theoretical Visibility

Table 20-16 Glossary

Term	Meaning
The Applicant	Spiorad na Mara Limited (the Project owner)
Array Area	The offshore area within which the offshore wind turbine generators (WTGs), associated foundations, Offshore Cables, and Offshore Substation Platform (OSP) (if required), will be located. This area encompasses the Turbine Area that will contain all above water surface infrastructure (WTGs / OSP) and an additional area within which further below water infrastructure (foundations and cables) may also be located.
Combined Effects	Combined effect of the individual development on one particular receptor; for example noise, dust and visual. This includes Project-Lifetime Effects and Receptor-Led Effects.
Cumulative Effects	Considers the likely significant effects of multiple impacts and activities from several developments.
Effect	Term used to express the consequence of an impact. The significance of an effect is determined by correlating the magnitude of the impact with the importance, or sensitivity, of the receptor or resource in accordance with defined significance criteria.
Embedded or 'Designed-in' Mitigation	Mitigation measures to avoid or reduce environmental effects that are directly incorporated into the preferred design for the Project. This can include standard practice in accordance with or without guidance. Embedded mitigation is considered as part of the impact assessment, before effect significance is identified.
Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR)	The Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) prepared to assess the likely significant effects of the Project on the environment.
Impact	Change that is caused by an action; for example, land clearing (action) during construction which results in habitat loss (impact)
Landfall	This consists of works from offshore Horizontal Directional Drill (HDD) exit pits (located below MLWS) to onshore at the Transition Joint Bays (TJB) (located above MHWS). The infrastructure and installation methods associated with the Landfall involves both onshore and offshore components.
Landfall Substation	The optional onshore substation located on the west side of the Isle of Lewis/ <i>Eilean Leòdhais</i> . Includes the platform, buildings and associated components which allows the voltage to be increased to meet onward transmission requirements.

Term	Meaning
Offshore Cable Area of Search (OCAS)	The area within which the offshore electrical and communication cables between the Array Area and Landfall up to Mean High Water Springs (MHWS) will be located.
Offshore Project Boundary	The 'red line boundary' encompassing the Offshore Project.
Offshore Project	The components of the Spiorad na Mara offshore wind farm (the Project) located seaward of Mean High Water Springs (MHWS).
Offshore Substation Platform (OSP)	The optional offshore substation located within the Turbine Area. Includes the platform and associated components which allows the voltage to be increased to meet onward transmission requirements.
Onshore Transmission Works (OTW) / Onshore Project	The components of the Spiorad na Mara offshore wind farm (the Project) located landward of Mean Low Water Springs (MLWS).
Onshore Transmission Works Boundary / Onshore Project Boundary	The 'red line boundary' encompassing all temporary and permanent works associated with the OTW/Onshore Project.
Project	The Spiorad na Mara offshore wind farm development. This term describes the whole development, including all offshore and onshore components.
Project Design Envelope	A description of the range of possible components that make up the Project design options under consideration when the exact engineering parameters are not yet known.
Scoping Opinion	A report presenting the written opinion of the Scottish Ministers, with input from Comhairle nan Eilean Siar (CnES) for the OTW, as to the scope and level of detail of information to be provided in the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for the Project.
Study Areas	Study Areas are determined for each technical discipline and are described within each technical chapter.
Turbine Area	A reduced area within the Array Area where above water surface infrastructure would be located i.e. Wind Turbine Generators (WTG) or Offshore Substation Platform (OSP). This area has been developed and refined through stakeholder engagement and environmental assessment.
Wind Turbine Generator (WTG)	The wind turbines that generate electricity consisting of tubular towers and blades attached to a nacelle housing mechanical and electrical generating equipment

20.17 REFERENCES

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