

THE CONSERVATION (NATURAL HABITAT, &c.) REGULATIONS 1994 (AS AMENDED)

LICENCE TO DISTURB MARINE SPECIES

Public Case Handling Report for Licence Number: EPS-00011662

Site	Hywind EPS Offshore Site
Company	Hywind Scotland Pilot Park Ltd 1 Kingdom Street London, W2 6BD, United Kingdom
Brief Description of Project	Hywind Scotland Pilot Park Geophysical Survey
Associated Licences	EPS-00011650 EPS-00011662

Species	harbour porpoise (<i>Phocoena phocoena</i>);bottlenose dolphin (<i>Tursiops truncatus</i>);minke whale (<i>Balaenoptera acutorostrata</i>);Risso's dolphin (<i>Grampus griseus</i>);white sided dolphin (<i>Lagenorhynchus acutus</i>);white-beaked dolphin (<i>Lagenorhynchus albirostris</i>)
Inshore/Offshore	Offshore

TEST 1	Purpose of licence
	Imperative reasons of overriding public interest (including those of a social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment)
Comments	
The Survey work is to be carried out to maintain the Hywind Scotland Pilot Park infrastructure, in providing a sustainable energy supply from renewables assisting with the overarching policies within Scotland, UK and Europe. Undertaking these surveys allows for the continued production of renewable energy helping Scotland to reach its overall target for greenhouse gas emissions. Providing a low-carbon supply of electricity and making a continued contribution to tackling climate change and achieving Scotland's Net Zero ambitions. Moreover, through the continued operation and maintenance of the Hywind Scotland Pilot Park (and floating wind more generally) opportunities are provided for the transfer of skills and knowledge from Scotland's oil and gas industry as it is phased out. Should general survey work not proceed Hywind Scotland Pilot Park would eventually cease to exist due to mechanical breakdown or failure. This resulting in a sustainable energy source helping Scotland meet its greenhouse gas emissions target and cease assisting with the overarching policies for Scotland, UK and Europe The applicant is not undertaking a statutory function.	
Test 1 satisfied?	YES

TEST 2	Satisfactory alternatives
Comments	
Alternative options were considered however, due to the need to accurately assess the assets integrity and determine the accurate location of infrastructure prior to remedial works. The proposed methods outlined by the applicant are the only viable way to ensure the accurate planning of the works required. There are no satisfactory alternatives to the use of the required noisy equipment during the works. These works are required to provide sufficient detail prior to undertaking the works. The applicant has noted: - Works location, duration and extent: the smallest working area possible has been proposed, and will be undertaken as quickly and efficiently as possible. Reducing the size of the working area would affect the ability to undertake the removal and laydown works. - Survey equipment and methodology: the use of the USBLs for ROV communications and the echo sounder are required to accurately determine the locations of infrastructure and its surrounding environment. Alternative options are available, however, they would not provide the remote sensing information required to enable proper and safe operation of ROVs and survey vessels required to undertake general survey requirements. Thus, it considered that the 'no satisfactory alternative test' has been met.	
Test 2 satisfied?	YES

TEST 3	Favourable conservation status
Comments	
The proposal will not have an adverse effect on the favourable conservation status of the EPS concerned, as long as the mitigation measures outlined are adhered to; and The key species capable of being disturbed by the activity and all equipment capable of disturbing the species have been correctly identified. However, other cetaceans may be present, and the mitigation measures should apply to all these species, as well as seals, basking sharks and turtles.	
Test 3 satisfied?	YES

Date application received: 16/02/2026

Consultation start date: 13/02/2026

Consultation end date: 13/03/2026

Notes

Date	title	Text
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National Marine Plan considerations:

The decision is: In accordance and no further action required
Comments: The marine geophysical surveys will support Renewables Policy 7 under Scotland's National Marine Plan by ensuring that adequate monitoring of the infrastructure, confirming it is fit for purpose and capable of withstanding any environmental changes. Equinor is committed to research and development of innovative technology that streamlines the operation and maintenance of its OWF whilst minimising its impact on the environment thereby meeting the objectives of Renewable Policy 9. The marine geophysical surveys will assist in informing these decisions. The marine geophysical surveys are essential for mapping the Hywind Scotland Pilot Park infrastructure. This will aid in generating ongoing positive economic and social impacts during its operation, thereby fulfilling the requirements of General Policy 2 and 3. GEN 13 Noise outlined on Scotland's National Marine Plan states that development and use in the marine environment should avoid significant adverse effects of man-made noise and vibration, especially on species sensitive to such effects. An EPS risk assessment has been undertaken to assess the effect of activities on marine mammals. This report states that with the implementation of mitigation measures, there will be no injury resulting from the proposed activities due to underwater noise and, thus, no offence related to injury of any cetacean species under the inshore regulations. Details of the proposed work will be provided to the Noise Registry.

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