

THE CONSERVATION (NATURAL HABITATS, &C.) REGULATIONS 1994

LICENCE TO DISTURB MARINE SPECIES

Licence Number: EPS/BS-00010299

This licence is granted under regulation 44(2)(e) of the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994 by the Scottish Ministers who, after consultation with, and having been advised as to the circumstances in which they should grant such licences by NatureScot are satisfied as regards the purpose for which the licence is granted, namely, for (2)(e) preserving public health or public safety or other imperative reasons of overriding public interest including those of a social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment; and that (a) there is no other satisfactory alternative and (b) that the action authorised will not be detrimental to the maintenance of the population of the species concerned at a favourable conservation status in their natural range; and unless revoked by the Scottish Ministers is valid from **04 May, 2023** to **29 February, 2024** and authorises:

[Redacted]

Thistle Wind Partners Limited

Capital Building

12-13 St Andrew Square

Edinburgh

EH2 2AF

Or any person authorised in writing by him / her to disturb the European protected species of harbour porpoise (*Phocoena phocoena*); bottlenose dolphin (*Tursiops truncatus*); minke whale (*Balaenoptera acutorostrata*); white sided dolphin (*Lagenorhynchus acutus*); white-beaked dolphin (*Lagenorhynchus albirostris*) at the Cluaran Ear-Thuath (NE2) Offshore Wind Farm Export Cable Corridor, as detailed in the application for a licence to disturb European Protected Species and supporting documents but only subject to the under-noted conditions:

PURPOSE AND CIRCUMSTANCES IN WHICH ACTION IS REQUIRED

This licence is granted for the purpose of permitting the disturbance of harbour porpoise (*Phocoena phocoena*); bottlenose dolphin (*Tursiops truncatus*); minke whale (*Balaenoptera acutorostrata*); white sided dolphin (*Lagenorhynchus acutus*); white-beaked dolphin (*Lagenorhynchus albirostris*) at the Cluaran Ear-Thuath (NE2) Offshore Wind Farm Export Cable Corridor, for (2)(e) preserving public health or public safety or other imperative reasons of overriding public interest including those of a social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment in connection with geophysical surveys of the Cluaran Ear-Thuath (NE2) export cable corridor at the following location(s):

Offshore Route to NE3, being the corridor bounded by joining the following points:

A: 58° 46.611' N 02° 15.238' W

B: 58° 47.915' N 02° 12.869' W

C: 58° 46.684' N 02° 10.359' W
 D: 58° 36.679' N 02° 09.816' W
 E: 58° 35.376' N 02° 12.131' W
 F: 58° 36.606' N 02° 14.672' W

and

Route to Sinclair's Bay, being the corridor bounded by joining the following points:

G: 58° 33.027' N 02° 59.819' W
 H: 58° 33.046' N 02° 59.499' W
 I: 58° 33.358' N 02° 45.705' W
 J: 58° 34.141' N 02° 42.436' W
 K: 58° 34.221' N 02° 41.992' W
 L: 58° 34.255' N 02° 41.526' W
 M: 58° 34.332' N 02° 37.833' W
 N: 58° 34.798' N 02° 34.456' W
 O: 58° 47.961' N 02° 21.543' W
 P: 58° 48.509' N 02° 18.258' W
 Q: 58° 46.804' N 02° 17.204' W
 R: 58° 33.571' N 02° 30.213' W
 S: 58° 33.357' N 02° 30.422' W
 T: 58° 33.143' N 02° 30.631' W
 U: 58° 32.732' N 02° 31.270' W
 V: 58° 32.494' N 02° 32.173' W
 W: 58° 31.849' N 02° 36.854' W
 X: 58° 31.821' N 02° 37.113' W
 Y: 58° 31.808' N 02° 37.376' W
 Z: 58° 31.736' N 02° 40.854' W
 AA: 58° 30.953' N 02° 44.120' W
 BB: 58° 30.873' N 02° 44.563' W
 CC: 58° 30.839' N 02° 45.028' W
 DD: 58° 30.521' N 02° 59.121' W
 EE: 58° 29.729' N 03° 07.490' W
 FF: 58° 29.708' N 03° 07.875' W
 GG: 58° 32.438' N 03° 06.053' W

And following Mean High Water Springs between points FF and GG, as shown in Annex One.

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

Geophysical surveys of export cable corridor using Multibeam Echosounder, Side Scan Sonar, Sub Bottom Profiler ("SBP"), Ultra Short Base Line and Sparker.

LICENCE CONDITIONS

1. The Licensee must ensure that all licensed activities are carried out in strict accordance with the mitigation and working methods proposed in the application for this licence, together with supporting information and all licensed activities must be carried out within the timescale(s) given within the application and any subsequent written correspondence between Marine Scotland – Licensing Operations Team ("MS-LOT") and the applicant, but subject to the following modifications or amendments made within this licence.
2. The Licensee must ensure that all licensed activities are carried out in strict accordance with the Cluaran Ear-Thuath (NE2) and Cluaran Deas Ear (E3) Geophysical Surveys for Export Cable Routes Risk Assessment, dated 18 April 2023 (EOR0764 TWP Scotwind EPS Supporting Doc - cable routes_Rev02).
3. In the event of the Licensee becoming aware that any of the information on which the issue of this licence was based has changed, the Licensing Authority must be notified as soon as reasonably practicable.
4. The Licensee must ensure that the Joint Nature Conservation Committee ("JNCC") 2017 Guidelines for minimizing the risk of injury and disturbance to marine mammals from seismic surveys is followed at all times in connection with the undertaking of such surveys as far as it is practical to do so. These are available from the JNCC website <https://hub.jncc.gov.uk/assets/e2a46de5-43d4-43f0-b296-c62134397ce4>.
5. The Licensee must ensure that, if any aspects of the proposed activities differ from the detail submitted in the Noise Registry - Initial Registration Form, a new Initial Registration Form must be completed and submitted to the Scottish Ministers and the JNCC no later than one week prior to commencement of the licensed activities.
6. The Licensee must ensure that where survey equipment has the capability to undergo a soft start procedure, this is implemented on every occasion survey equipment is switched on.
7. Except where it is not relevant to the provisions of this licence, the Licensee must ensure that the Scottish Marine Wildlife Watching Code is adhered to at all times, including during transit to and from survey locations.
8. The Licensee must ensure that copies of the licence are available for inspection by any person authorised by the Scottish Ministers at the office of the Licensee and at all sites where licensed activities are taking place.
9. Any person authorised by the Scottish Ministers must be permitted to inspect the operations relating to the licence at any reasonable time. The Licensee must allow appropriate assistance to facilitate inspection.
10. The Licensee must, no later than one month after the expiry date of this licence, submit to MS-LOT, a written report detailing all actions taken in accordance with the specified terms and conditions of the licence. This report must detail the procedures, visual observations and include the original Marine Mammal Recording Form(s). Any difficulties encountered, or recommendations should also be noted.
11. The Licensee must, no later than 12 weeks after completion of the noisy activity, complete a 'close-out' noise registry form. This is available from the JNCC website <https://mnr.jncc.gov.uk/>.
12. The Licensee must ensure that where 24-hour working is required, survey work should start as far as practicable during daylight hours.
13. The Licensee must ensure that the SBPs are used at the lowest practicable sound level and over the shortest period of time to achieve the survey objectives.
14. The Licensee must ensure that no survey activities take place within 10km of the Caithness and Sutherland Peatlands SPA between 15 June 2023 and 15 September 2023.

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

Signed:
[Redacted]

Marine Scotland
Marine Planning and Policy
Licensing Operations Team
375 Victoria Road
Aberdeen
AB11 9DB
02 May, 2023