

Date: 16 November 2022  
Our ref: 407833  
Your ref: AXE-MCZ-005



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## **BY EMAIL ONLY**

Dear Sarah,

### **Formal advice to D&S IFCA: Axe Estuary MCZ: Nets**

Thank you for the above assessment, received by email on 26 September 2022.

Natural England is a non-departmental public body. Our statutory purpose is to ensure that the natural environment is conserved, enhanced, and managed for the benefit of present and future generations, thereby contributing to sustainable development.

In 2012, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) announced a revised approach to the management of commercial fisheries in European Marine Sites (EMS)<sup>1</sup>. The revised approach was subsequently extended to ensure fishing activities in Marine Conservation Zones (MCZs) are managed in accordance with the provisions of the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009.

Assessments have been made of the effects of the following fisheries activities in Axe Estuary MCZ:

- Nets (all features) ref. AXE-MCZ-005 to include
  - static fixed nets: Gill nets, trammels, entangling
  - Passive nets: Drift nets (demersal)
  - Seine nets & other: Shrimp push nets, Fyke & stakenets, ring nets

Natural England has considered the assessment prepared by D&S IFCA for the purposes of making an assessment consistent with the provisions of the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009. Please accept this letter as Natural England's formal advice on the assessment and the conclusions it makes. We are content that the best available and most up to date evidence has been used to carry out the assessment by D&S IFCA officers, to determine whether management of an activity is required to conserve site features, and thus to ensure the protection of the features, from direct and indirect impacts from the collection of marine fisheries resources.

It is Natural England's view that, through their assessments, D&S IFCA has appropriately identified that

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<sup>1</sup> Defra revised approach: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/revised-approach-to-the-management-of-commercial-fisheries-in-european-marine-sites-overarching-policy-and-delivery>

the above stated activities are not likely to hinder the conservation objectives of the feature(s) of the MCZ. We agree with the assessment in that these activities fall under the D&S IFCA Netting Permit Byelaw and are currently not permitted to take place within the Axe Estuary MCZ.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or require further information.

Yours sincerely,

*Esther Hughes*

Esther Hughes  
Marine Lead Adviser