

Date: 16 November 2022
Our ref: 407835
Your ref: AXE-MCZ-007



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BY EMAIL ONLY

Dear Sarah,

Formal advice to D&S IFCA: Axe Estuary MCZ: Seine 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)¹. 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:

- Seine Nets (all features) ref. AXE-MCZ-007
 - Seine Nets and other: Beach Seine

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 those activities that are not likely to hinder the conservation objectives of the feature(s) of the MCZ. There are some minor comments in the appendix.

¹ 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>

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

Appendix

1. Although the activity Seine netting (Beach Seine) is not thought to be occurring within the MCZ, if future evidence suggests a change in this, Natural England may need to reassess whether this interaction is hindering the conservation objective of the feature.