

Devon and Severn IFCA News

Response to Exmouth Marina Dredge Licence Variation

Devon and Severn IFCA has responded to a Variation on the Marine Licence to Dispose of Dredge Material from Exmouth Marina at Sea

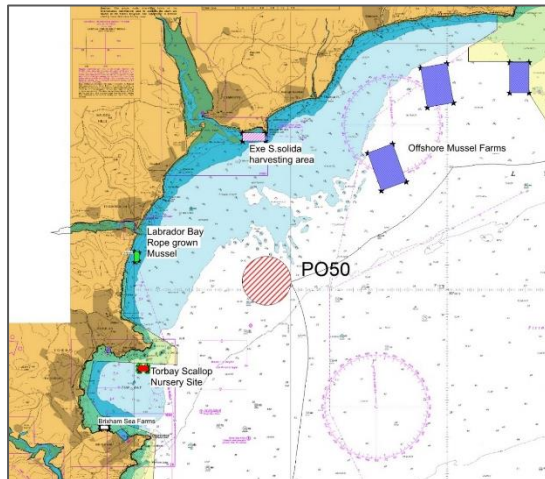


Figure 1 Mariculture Sites between Torbay and Lyme Bay and location of PO050 Disposal Site

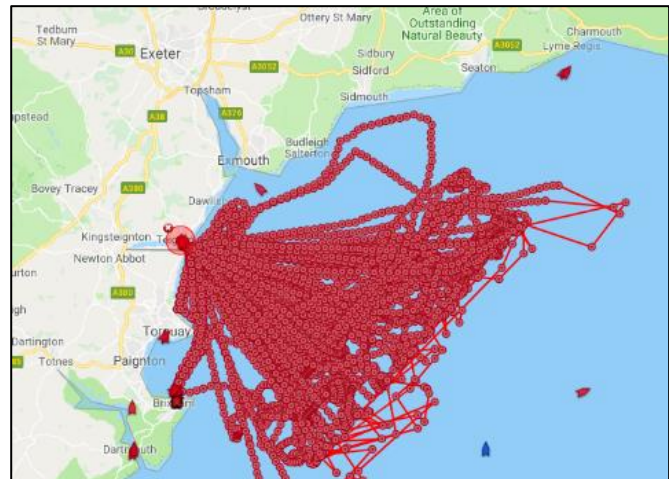


Figure 2 IVMS Track of one vessel commercial trawler fishing in the PO050 area

Background

In 2017 Exmouth Marina Ltd was granted a licence (L/2017/00034/1) by the MMO for a 10 year period to dispose of a maximum of 10,000 wet tonnes of dredged material per annum at licensed disposal site PO070, located between Sprey Point and Teignmouth. However, in February 2019 after the last disposal event, black sand appeared on the amenity beaches adjacent to the disposal site. It was suspected that the dredged material was migrating onto the beaches nearby. In response to this, Exmouth Marina Ltd has submitted a variation request to change the disposal location of dredged material to site PO050 located 7.7km further offshore and reduce the overall dredge and disposal volumes. A scoping report has been produced by MarineSpace on behalf of Exmouth Marina Ltd and can be read [here](#).

D&S IFCA's Response

D&S IFCA was asked to respond to the scoping study and licence variation request. D&S IFCA's response highlights the potential impacts the disposal of the dredge material at the new site PO050 and includes concerns relating to:

1. **Inshore Fisheries** – Very little information is included in the scoping report on the fisheries that take place in the vicinity of PO050 disposal site. D&S IFCA, in its response, included charts of the commercial Potting and Netting fisheries taking place between Torbay and Lyme Bay, which indicate the importance of this area to the inshore fleet. D&S IFCA is aware that at least 20 mobile fishing vessels (and at certain times of the year, many more) operate in the PO050 disposal site. Charts of IVMS plots of six mobile fishing vessels (demersal and pelagic trawlers, and scallop dredgers) were also included in the response and clearly indicated the importance of this area of South Devon to these fishing sectors.
2. **Fish populations, spawning and nursery grounds** – The scoping report highlights the importance of the area for fish, in particular the essential fish habitats including spawning and nursery grounds, yet concludes that the impact of fisheries and ecology

will be negligible. D&S IFCA raised concerns that the disposal in this area would smother and contaminate these habitats.

3. **Mariculture** - D&S IFCA's response included charts of the location of mariculture sites in the vicinity of PO050 site and describes its concerns relating to the movement and migration of the material through tides, currents and storm on the mariculture production sites and quality of the shellfisheries

Other areas of concern were also emphasised by D&S IFCA and included vulnerability of sensitive benthic species located close to the site; the shortcomings of the predictive modelling of sediment transport; the lack of inclusion in the modelling of wave dynamics or wind driven circulation; and the absence of calibration and validation of the model. D&S IFCA's response can be read [here](#).

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