

Date: 12 July 2022  
Our refs: 396991 / 396995 / 396997  
Your refs: DAR-MCZ-001, DAR-MCZ-004, DAR-MCZ-005 / DAR-MCZ-002 / DAR-MCZ-003



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**BY EMAIL ONLY**

Dear Sarah,

**RE: Marine Conservation Zone: Dart Estuary MCZ UKMCZ0057 – various activities**

Thank you for the above assessments, received by email on 14 June 2022.

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.

The effects of the following fisheries activities in **Dart Estuary MCZ** have been reviewed:

- **Seine nets & other**
- **Mixed gear**
- **Shore based activities**

Natural England has considered the assessment prepared by Devon and Severn 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 to determine whether management of an activity is required to ensure the protection of site features from direct and indirect impacts from the collection of marine fisheries resources.

**It is Natural England's view that through their assessments, Devon and Severn IFCA appear to have appropriately assessed the proposed activities in relation to the conservation objectives of the features of the Dart Estuary MCZ.**

**We agree that the activities assessed, alone and in combination, pose no significant risk to the conservation objectives for the features of the Dart Estuary MCZ.**

We believe that Devon and Severn IFCA's ongoing commitment to monitoring this fishery, together with the application of the current thinking on Adaptive Risk Management, provides a robust mechanism for re-assessing any risk or harm to designated sites. This view is based on current knowledge of the impact of relevant fishing activities on site features.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you require further information.

Yours sincerely,

*J. Boyle*

Jay Boyle  
Marine Lead Adviser

**Annex 1:**

If levels of activity over features of the site were to significantly increase, Natural England would need to reassess whether this interaction is hindering the conservation objectives of the associated features of the Dart Estuary MCZ.

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