

Date: 18/07/2016
Our ref: 189100
Your ref: D&S IFCA Interaction IDs (Appendix 1)



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BY EMAIL ONLY

Dear Sarah,

**Re: Fisheries in EMS Habitats Regulations Assessment for Amber Activities: Assessments for European Marine Sites: Plymouth Sound & Estuaries SAC UK0013111 and Tamar Estuaries Complex SPA UK9010141
Fishing Activities: Formal Notice – Handworking**

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 objective of this revised approach is to ensure that all existing and potential commercial fishing activities are managed in accordance with Article 6 of the Habitats Directive. This document states that for 'amber/green' risk activities a site level assessment will be required to assess whether management of an activity is required to conserve site features. The Department's strong preference is that site level assessments be carried out in a manner that is consistent with the provisions of Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive. Appropriate management measures should be put in place to ensure that the fishing activity or activities either 1) have no likely significant effect on a site in view of its conservation objectives or b) following assessment, can be concluded to have no adverse effect on the integrity of the site.

Natural England has considered the five Habitat Regulations Assessments (HRA) prepared by D&S IFCA for the purposes of making an assessment consistent with the provisions of Article 6(3). Please accept this letter as Natural England's formal advice on those assessments including the conclusions reached in those assessments. Assessments have been made of the effects of Handworking on the Plymouth Sound and Estuaries SAC and Tamar Estuaries Complex SPA qualifying features (see **Appendix 1: gear-feature interactions**).

We are content that the best available and most up to date evidence has been used to carry out the HRAs 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.

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>

It is Natural England's view that through their five HRAs, D&S IFCA officers appear to have appropriately identified those activities that are not likely to have a significant effect in view of the site's conservation objectives and whether management measures are required in order to ensure that the assessed fishing activity or activities will have no adverse effect on the integrity of the EMS.

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

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'V. Roberts', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Viv Roberts

Marine Adviser
Natural England

Tel. 02080267589

Appendix 1: List of gear feature interaction for which TLSE have been undertaken

D&S IFCA Interaction ID	Fishing Activity	Sub-feature(s)/ Supporting Habitat(s)
HRA_UK0013111_AE19	SAC Handworking (access from vessel)	Lower-mid saltmarsh
		Mid-upper saltmarsh
		Pioneer saltmarsh
		Transition & driftline saltmarsh
		Upper saltmarsh
		Atlantic salt meadows
HRA_UK9010141_AE19	SPA Handworking (access from vessel)	Saltmarsh spp.
HRA_UK9010141_AF19		Annual vegetation of driftlines
HRA_UK9010141_AG19		Coastal reedbeds
HRA_UK9010141_AU19		Freshwater & coastal grazing marsh
HRA_UK0013111_AE20	SAC Handworking (access from land)	Lower-mid saltmarsh
		Mid-upper saltmarsh
		Pioneer saltmarsh
		Transition & driftline saltmarsh
		Upper saltmarsh
		Atlantic salt meadows
HRA_UK9010141_AE20	SPA Handworking (access from land)	Saltmarsh spp.
HRA_UK9010141_AF20		Annual vegetation of driftlines
HRA_UK9010141_AG20		Coastal reedbeds
HRA_UK9010141_AU20		Freshwater & coastal grazing marsh
D&S IFCA Interaction ID	Fishing Activity	Sub-feature(s)
HRA_UK0013111_D19	Handworking (access from vessel)	Intertidal seagrass beds
HRA_UK9010141_D19		Intertidal seagrass beds
HRA_UK0013111_D20	Handworking (access from land)	Intertidal seagrass beds
HRA_UK9010141_D20		Intertidal seagrass beds

D&S IFCA Interaction ID	Fishing Activity	Sub-feature(s)
HRA_UK0013111_K19	Handworking (access from vessel)	Intertidal mud
HRA_UK0013111_L19		Intertidal sand & muddy sand
HRA_UK0013111_P19		Intertidal mixed sediment
HRA_UK0013111_AR19		Intertidal coarse sediment
HRA_UK0013111_K20	Handworking (access from land)	Intertidal mud
HRA_UK0013111_L20		Intertidal sand & muddy sand
HRA_UK0013111_P20		Intertidal mixed sediment
HRA_UK0013111_AR20		Intertidal coarse sediment
D&S IFCA Interaction ID	Fishing Activity	Sub-feature(s)
HRA_UK0013111_W19	Handworking (access from vessel)	Intertidal rock
HRA_UK0013111_W20	Handworking (access from land)	Intertidal rock

D&S IFCA Interaction ID	Fishing Activity	Sub-feature(s)
HRA_UK9010141_K19	Handworking (access from vessel)	Intertidal mud
HRA_UK9010141_P19		Intertidal mixed sediments
HRA_UK9010141_L19		Intertidal sand & muddy sand
HRA_UK9010141_AT19		Water column
HRA_UK9010141_AV19		Avocet
HRA_UK9010141_AV19		Little egret
HRA_UK9010141_K20	Handworking (access from land)	Intertidal mud
HRA_UK9010141_P20		Intertidal mixed sediments
HRA_UK9010141_L20		Intertidal sand & muddy sand
HRA_UK9010141_AT20		Water column
HRA_UK9010141_AO20		Avocet
HRA_UK9010141_AO20		Little egret