

Date: 25/07/19  
Our ref: 289732  
Your ref: BFP-MCZ-003



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**BY EMAIL ONLY**

Dear Sarah,

**Formal advice to Devon & Severn IFCA: Bideford to Foreland Point Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ) Assessment – demersal trawl and dredges on subtidal sediments**

Thank you for the above assessment, received by email on 19<sup>th</sup> July 2019.

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). 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 Bideford to Foreland Point MCZ:

- Demersal trawl and dredges on subtidal sediments - ref. BFP-MCZ-003

Natural England has considered the assessment prepared by Devon & 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.

Natural England does have some minor comments relating to the Bideford to Foreland Point MCZ assessment, but this does not alter our views on the validity of the conclusions drawn (**Appendix 1: Minor comments on MCZ assessment**).

We are content that the best available and most up to date evidence has been used to carry out the assessment by Devon & Severn 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, Devon & Severn IFCA officers appear to have appropriately identified those activities that are likely to hinder the conservation objectives of the feature of the MCZ.**

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 'Ruth Porter', enclosed within a light grey rectangular border.

Ruth Porter

Marine Lead Adviser

Tel. 0208026754

## **Appendix 1 – Minor comments on the MCZ assessment in relation to the Bideford to Foreland Point MCZ**

1. The conclusion of the current MCZ assessment is based on the existing habitat point data for the site. The 2019 Environment Agency sediment grab survey will provide more evidence on the presence and special distribution of the subtidal sediments within the Bideford to Foreland Point MCZ. Once habitat data is available from the EA grab survey then an assessment can be completed in conjunction with iVMS fishing effort data to confirm that there is no significant risk of the activity hindering the achievement of the conservation objectives stated for the MCZ.