



Kingfisher Talking points

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Image: © Robert Timoney/AlamyStockPhoto



Floating wind comes to the Celtic Sea

But early consultation with fishers allows their input to site selection

The summer of 2022 saw five large areas of the Celtic Sea identified as possible sites for floating offshore wind developments. Through site assessment and consultation, these were then whittled down to five smaller areas, announced in October 2022.

Unsurprisingly, the local fishing industry is concerned about 'spatial squeeze' and the possible loss of fishing grounds in the Celtic Sea. But there is also a contrast with previous offshore wind projects in that the industry has had the

opportunity to give input before the sites are chosen. According to Colin Warwick, who chairs FLOWW (the Fishing Liaison with Offshore Wind and Wet Renewables Group) and has been involved in the input, this is a first.

The process in the Celtic Sea

The five sites originally selected by The Crown Estate (TCE) were known as 'Areas of Search'. These have now been narrowed down to 'Refined Areas of Search', with two of the original sites removed from consideration and five

"There's a lot at stake here in the Celtic Sea - and elsewhere - because floating wind will mean we won't be able to fish in certain areas."

- Colin Warwick

smaller potential project locations identified within the remaining three areas. The plan is to launch a competitive tender for the final sites in mid-2023.

As part of the 'refinement' process, The Crown Estate has actively engaged with the local fishing industry. For example, in the summer, it organised visits to ports including Padstow, Newlyn, Bideford and Milford to understand in more detail the fishing activities that take place there and the concerns of local fishing crews. These views are being fed into the decision-making process

Site selection more important than ever

According to Colin Warwick who took part in three port visits, the process of site selection has become more sensitive than ever following a report in 2022 into the impacts of offshore floating wind developments on fishing.

The report, from the National Federation of Fishermen's Organisations (NFFO) and Scottish Fishermen's Federation (SFF), challenges the previous assumption that fishing can safely resume post-construction in floating wind sites. Instead, it suggests that the anchor systems of floating turbines mean fishing cannot safely be undertaken in a floating wind farm.

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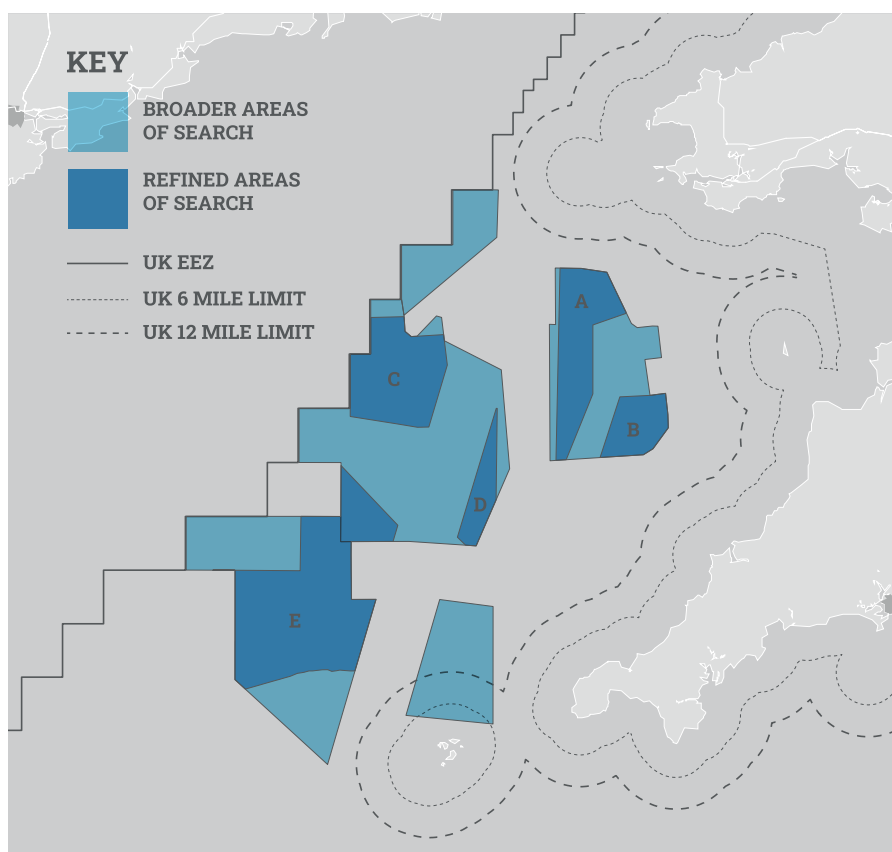


FIGURE 1.1 Celtic Sea, Refined Areas of Search, Location Map

"Space is a constant challenge as it already is, so it is our job to take action now to minimise the impact of the displacement. We have worked closely with the Crown Estate so far and fed in data and evidence to demonstrate key areas of importance and we hope this is reflected in the final site selection."

- Chris Ranford

FIGURE 1.2 Offshore wind turbines: different designs

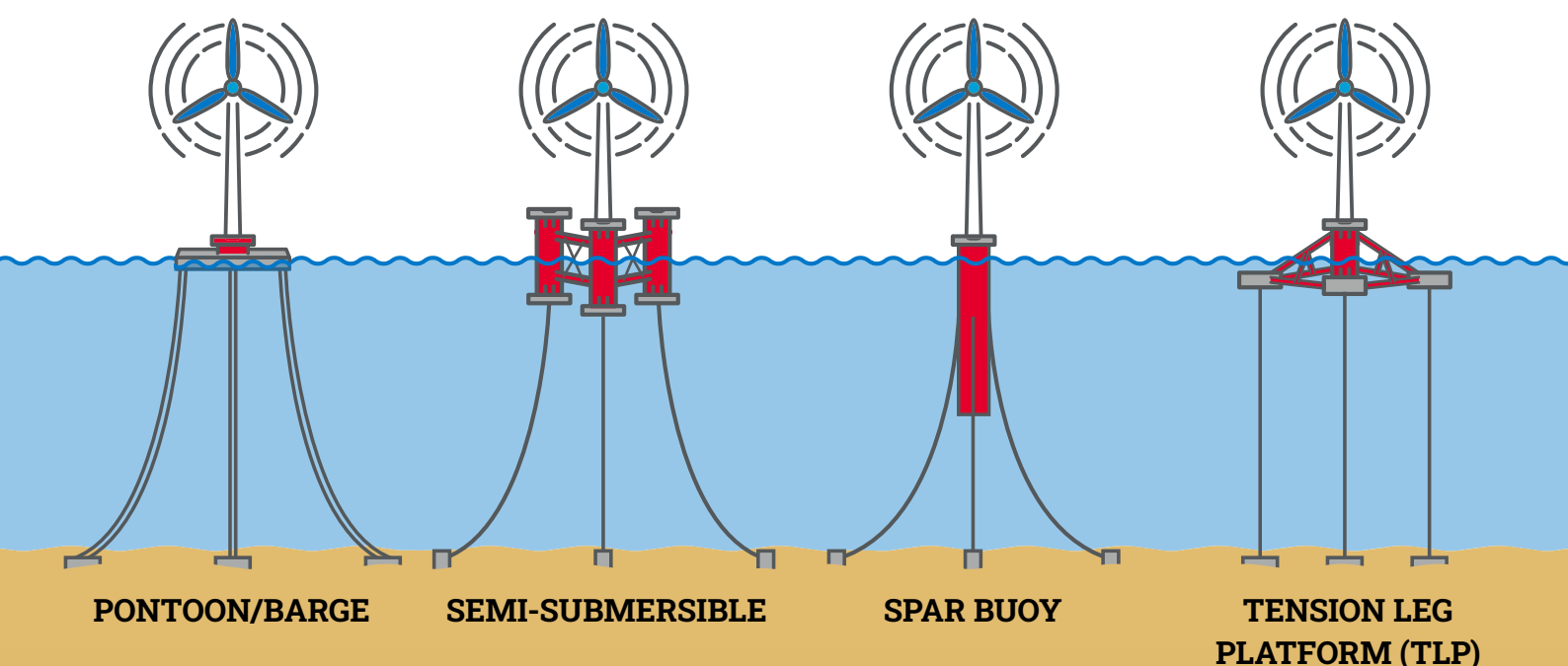




Image: Newlyn, Cornwall: one of several ports where The Crown Estate has engaged with the fishing industry

Bearing this in mind, Colin Warwick welcomes the new approach to consultation. “Historically, we’ve always dealt with the issues around fishing and offshore wind after they’ve happened. Unlike other sectors, fishing wasn’t a statutory consultee in the development process even though we were the first people making a living from the seas.

“There’s a lot at stake here in the Celtic Sea – and elsewhere – because floating wind will mean we won’t be able to fish in certain areas. But this new approach to consultation with the fishing sector gives us a welcome opportunity to make our fishing activities – and the impact upon them – understood. This could really break the mould in terms of how the industry gets involved and builds relationships with the offshore wind sector.”

Other local reaction

Also involved in local consultations and port visits is the Cornish Fish Producers’ Organisation (CFPO), and Chief Executive Chris Ranford shares concerns about spatial squeeze. He says, “The introduction of floating offshore wind in the Celtic Sea will certainly have an impact on our fleet, as well as other nationalities fishing in the Celtic Sea. With targets for 4GW by 2035 and then 20GW after that, it has the potential for mass displacement. It’s important to be aware that it’s not just the direct loss of fishing grounds, it’s the displacement effect which will knock on to all parts of the fleet.

“Space is a constant challenge as it already is, so it is our job to take action now to minimise the impact of the displacement. We have worked closely with the Crown

TIMELINE FOR CELTIC SEA TENDER

JULY 2022

Announcement of
5 possible sites



MID-LATE 2022

Engagement to refine sites
and decide Project
Development Areas



LATE 2022

Update on tender principles



MID 2023

Tender launch

Estate so far and fed in data and evidence to demonstrate key areas of importance and we hope this is reflected in the final site selection.

“We recognise the demand for renewable energy and how that sits with government priorities, so as a fishing industry we are pro co-existence. Food and energy security should carry the same weight.”

What happens next?

The process of deciding on the project areas and launching the tender will continue over the next few months. The CFPO, NFFO and others will continue to engage with TCE (and the developers once they are selected) around fishing activities, site selection and displacement issues.

If you fish in these seas, it is worth putting your own views forward via the CFPO or NFFO, or via fishing liaison officers. You could also keep an eye on progress via The Crown Estate website; updates should appear on the floating offshore wind webpages.



Mobile oil and gas moorings: Six key things to know

An incident in 2022 highlighted the dangers of fishers trawling near temporary moorings. By understanding more about these moorings, you could avoid the same type of incident yourself

1. Trawls and mobile moorings are a risky combination

Just a few months ago, a large Norwegian pelagic trawler, working in the UK sector in the North Sea, started tracking towards a mobile offshore drilling unit (MODU). Alerted by the emergency response and rescue vessel (ERRV) that it was approaching the 500 metre Safety Zone, the trawler diverted and then carried on fishing. It sounds like a minor incident, but it wasn't.

What the fishing crew didn't realise was that the MODU was held in place by a 'clockface' of moorings that reached about 1000 metre

beyond the 500 metre zone. After diverting, the trawler cut one mooring, damaged another and lost its own high-value trawl gear.

No longer so securely anchored, the rig moved several metres. In a worst-case scenario (which didn't happen), that could have been catastrophic for the trawler, the rig and the marine environment.

Andrew Third of the Scottish Fishermen's Federation (SFF) said, "This incident highlights why the fishing and oil and gas industries need to act with extreme caution in relation to moorings.

"For the oil and gas industry, this means high-quality information supplied to fishers, in the correct geographical format (WGS84 datum in Degrees, Minutes and Decimals of a minute (DMM)) and consideration of dedicated guard vessels. For fishers, this means keeping up to date with the latest information available via FishSAFE and the Kingfisher Bulletin and being aware of the distance mooring lines often extend outside of 500 metre Safety Zones."

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FIGURE 2.1 Mooring lines spread out from the rig like a clockface, often extending 100s of metres beyond the rig's 500 metre Safety Zone

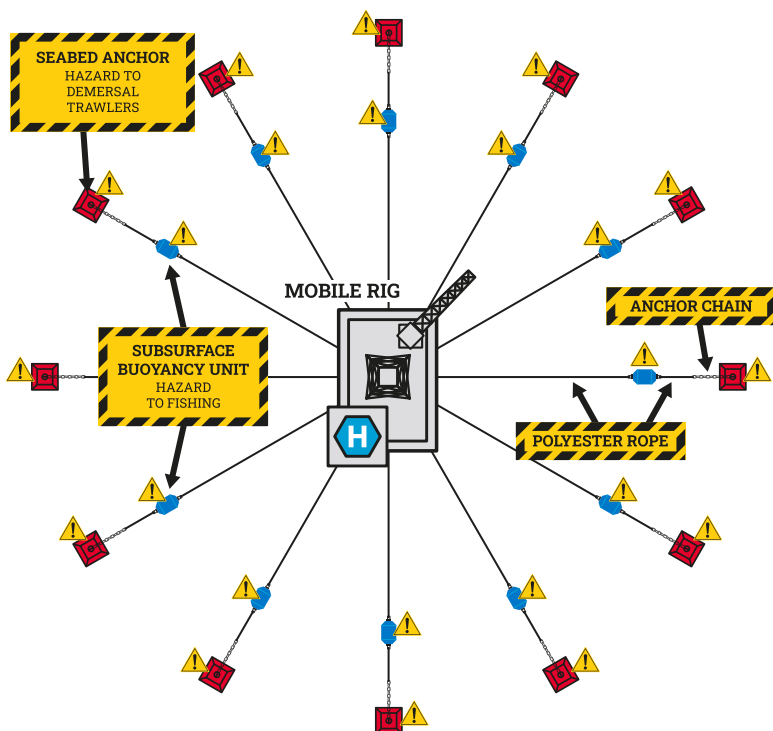
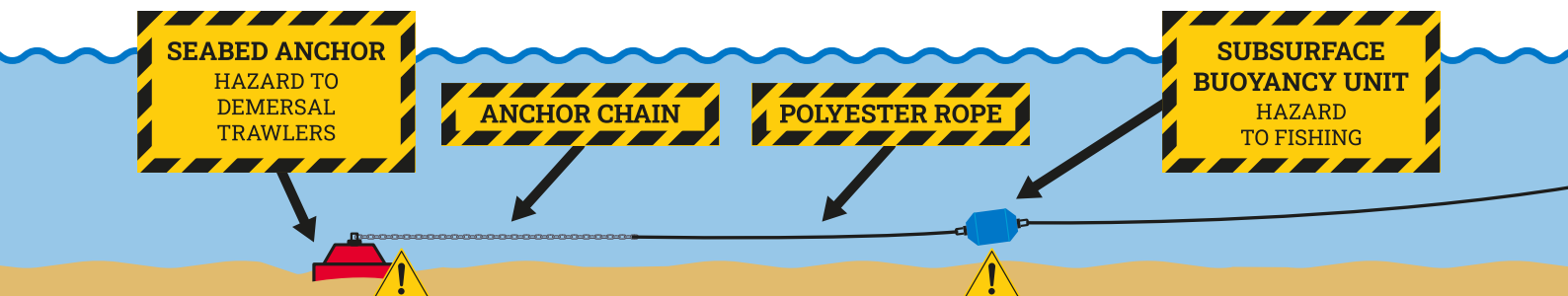


FIGURE 2.2 Subsurface buoyancy units, the size of a car, are sometimes used to keep rope away from the seabed. These too can be a fishing hazard.



2. It's useful to think of them in terms of a 'clockface'

What are we talking about when we talk about temporary moorings?

Moorings are the lines (chains and ropes) and fixings (anchors) used for 'station-keeping', i.e. holding MODUs in place on the seabed without disturbing production, extraction or other operations. Typically, this may be during the exploration and development stage of a well, or during the 'plug and abandonment' stage at the end of its life.

To keep the unit stationary, the mooring lines will radiate outwards in a circle, attaching it to 8-12 different anchors. These can weigh about 20 tonnes and will be either fully or partially buried. The mooring lines are often a combination of steel chain and tough polyester fibre ropes

3. Not all moorings are the same, but they all present risks to fishers

The configuration and design of temporary moorings depend on a number of factors, and it's useful to understand these.

One major factor that matters to fishing crews is the depth of the water because this will affect how far the mooring lines extend. For example, with a water depth of 100 metres, the radius of the moorings could be around 1500 metres – significantly further than the 500 metre Safety Zone around the MODU. The deeper the water, the further the mooring lines may extend.

Another factor affecting the design of temporary moorings is the seabed conditions and the extent of the nearby assets, such as wellheads and pipelines. These can easily be damaged by the mooring chains, which are therefore kept away from them using the ropes. These ropes themselves can be easily damaged by mud or abrasion, so they are kept off the seabed by subsurface buoyancy units (about the size of a family car).

But whatever the particular design, the issues are similar:

- fishing gear can snag on the lines and anchors, creating a risk for fishers of lost or damaged gear or worse
- gear can damage the moorings (in particular, the lines) creating significant financial and environmental risks and damage

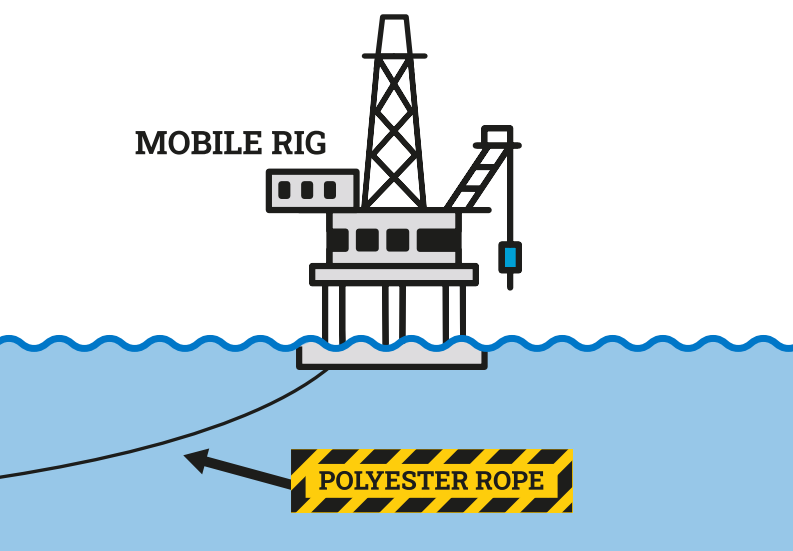
According to Andrew Third, "The SFF is in no doubt that mooring systems that are left unprotected pose a serious risk to fishers. It should also be borne in mind that fishing gear recovery operations in incidents such as the one involving the Norwegian trawler can be very hazardous and can pose a serious risk to vessel and crew."

4. You're most likely to come across them in the North Sea

Temporary oil and gas moorings can be used anywhere that wells are being explored, developed or plugged and abandoned.

In UK waters, you're most likely to see them in the Central and Northern areas of the UK sector of the North Sea. At any one time, there may be around 20 MODUs in these areas, using temporary moorings, though note this is just an average.

Depending on the specific operation, the mobile rig and its moorings may be in place for 2-3 weeks or even 2-3 months. Once the work is done, they are moved elsewhere.



5. You need to watch out for what's left

There may be some after-effects once the temporary rig and temporary moorings have been moved on. First, assets such as wellheads and pipelines will remain in place, or the development activity done using the MODU may lead to further subsea structures being installed.

Secondly, the size of the anchors mean they can leave craters and small clay deposits or berms behind them. Often these craters may backfill, as will seabed scarring caused by chains being laid, but clay berms or boulders can create snagging risks, especially where the soil on the seabed is stiff.

6. Help is at hand in terms of avoiding them

Despite the experience with the Norwegian trawler, MODUs and temporary moorings should be avoidable by fishing vessels who are on the alert for them and taking sensible precautions. Since the moorings are subsea, they won't be visible on the surface of the water and they won't be marked by buoys or lighting. However,

- The MODU will be highly visible on the surface and will have a legal 500m Safety Zone all round. The key point to understand here is that, as explained above, the moorings will likely extend beyond the 500m zone – how far will depend on the water depth, but it could be 1000m or more beyond.
- Emergency response and rescue vessels (ERRVs) also operate around the MODU and should be aware of the exact positioning of temporary anchors and other moorings, so they should alert fishers in the vicinity.
- Locations of these temporary rigs and moorings are given on the Kingfisher Bulletin, together with notices about the installation and removal of rigs and moorings, and details of where they are being moved to. Locations of longer-term installations, such as FPSOs, should be included on FishSAFE information.
- Subsurface buoyancy units may show up on forward-looking echo sounders.
- Installation and removal operations usually involve large anchor-handling vessels, so their activity will be easily visible to vessels in the vicinity. Anchors and lines are often pre-laid a day or so in advance, and then the rig is connected up to them.

The plea of those working on this in the oil and gas industry is that fishers should – to quote one of them – “be inquisitive!”. Their advice to fishers is to use the Kingfisher Bulletin and FishSAFE, and to look out for any combination of the elements above and to think about the possibility of moorings under the surface.



SCAN ME

Temporary rigs and moorings are shown on the Kingfisher Bulletin, together with notices about their installation and removal. Sign up at kingfisherbulletin.org or download the app.

Don't let your gear get stuck in the past!

There are some amazing historic wrecks in UK water, dating back centuries, but they could be a risk to your gear and your bank balance

© Bournemouth University

Usually when we highlight snagging hazards in Talking Points, we're talking about modern structures like oil & gas moorings or wind turbines. But another seabed risk to your fishing gear could be something very much older – dating back, in fact, to the First World War, the Middle Ages or even the Bronze Age.

The waters around the UK have thousands of wrecks, and a small proportion of these have special historic or archaeological significance, relating to either the vessel or its cargo. To prevent damage through activities like diving, salvage, dredging or fishing, these are protected by legislation.

Penalties for breaching this legislation and damaging historic wrecks can be steep – as high as £50,000, in theory. So, to help you and your gear stay on the right side of history, we've answered some common questions below.



Image: © Rooswijk1740 Project

Historic Wrecks FAQs

How do I know which wrecks are protected?

Around the coasts of England, Scotland and Wales, there are just over 90 wreck sites (with some sites covering more than one wreck) protected or 'scheduled' for their historic or archaeological value. They are shown on Admiralty charts and can be downloaded onto plotters.

Different sites are covered by different legislation, depending partly on where they are located (see below under 'What legal protections are there?') and more sites may become protected (or given a different protection status) over time.

How are these sites chosen?

Obviously, these are not the only ancient shipwrecks around Britain, but they've been selected as a representative sample of the most interesting, unique and nationally important sites for future generations.

They range from a Bronze Age cargo off the Devon coast to a 17th-century Dutch merchant vessel and 17th-century Danish warship off Shetland to a First World War German U-boat near Dover.

What state are they in?

It varies, depending on factors such as the wreck's age, how it happened, the type of seabed, how dynamic the

environment is, and what damage has been done over the ages.

At some sites, very little will remain; at others, the vessel or its cargo may be in excellent condition.

Are there any other types of protected wrecks?

Yes, there are legal protections in place restricting activities around the wreckage of some military aircraft and vessels. And there are also two shipwrecks designated as dangerous wrecks – for example, the SS Richard Montgomery, which sank off Sheerness in 1944, still has a cargo of munitions.

Are historic wrecks a safety risk for fishing vessels?

As with any shipwreck, there's a risk of snagging at all these sites – meaning equipment and even lives could be at risk.

Examples from Historic England include a large amount of pots and line becoming entangled in HMS/m A1, a Protected Wreck of a pre First World War British submarine in the Solent. The lost or abandoned gear caused damage to the submarine's hull, and investigations are ongoing into its ownership.

What legal protections are there?

You probably won't be surprised to hear that the legislation in place to protect historic wrecks is complicated. England & Wales have different laws on this to Scotland, and it's easy to find yourself lost in a maze of rules and annexes. But here are the headline points:

- In England and Wales, historic wreck sites and the two dangerous wreck sites (see above) come under the Protection of Wrecks Act 1973, or the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979. Administration relating to them (e.g. diving licences) is handled by Historic England and Cadw respectively.
- In Scotland, a few wrecks are designated under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979, but mostly they are designated as Historic Marine Protected Areas (HMPAs) under the Marine (Scotland) Act 2010, making them part of the wider network of MPAs. The first place to go for advice is Historic Environment Scotland (HES.)
- Military remains and graves are designated under the Protection of Military Remains Act 1986, and the Ministry of Defence is responsible for them.

Though the legal detail around different types and individual sites varies, the overall aim is broadly similar: to restrict any activity that might disturb, damage, tamper with or remove the assets and remains on the seabed.

What are the restrictions on fishing?

Once a site is designated, exclusions or restrictions on certain activities (including fishing) usually apply within a 50-200m radius. These will depend on the specific site, but can include not just trawling but also depositing anything, such as anchors or fishing gear, that could damage or restrict access to the site.

Of course, some wreck sites may be in treacherous or rocky waters that fishing vessels would probably be keen to avoid anyway. However, other sites may be in important fishing grounds, especially since wrecks can often be a magnet for fish.

How are restrictions enforced?

Historic England and HES, which look after historic places, say they are very keen to build good relationships with local fishing industries – not least because fishing skippers are often the people who discover and tell them about historic remains.

Both organisations are well aware that some protected wreck sites (or those under consideration) are in attractive fishing grounds, and so insist that they use carefully targeted measures to make sure that underwater heritage is protected.



IN SUMMARY: KEY POINTS

Protected historic wrecks are shown on Admiralty charts

- Like any wreck, they present snagging risks for fishing gear.
- Deliberate or reckless damage to these sites could lead to penalties as high as £50,000.
- Historic England and HES are keen to collaborate with the fishing industry. As well as providing information on individual sites and fishing restrictions, they would be pleased to hear about any historic remains you come across.
- Information on all protected and scheduled sites in English waters is available at <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/>; for sites in Scottish waters, see <https://portal.historicenvironment.scot/>

Highly Protected Marine Areas: what's known so far

With five areas in English waters shortlisted as possible HPMAs, what does that mean for fishing?

Back in the summer, the UK Government shortlisted five areas of English waters as possible pilot Highly Protected Marine Areas (HPMAs). Fishing communities are now waiting for the final decision on which areas will be selected.

Given the scale of restrictions likely in these areas and given that other HPMAs may be created in future, it's worthwhile keeping an eye on how this story unfolds, even if you don't fish in one of the five 'candidate' areas.

What are HPMAs?

The main intention of HPMAs is biodiversity and ecosystem recovery. The UK government says they "will complement the existing Marine Protected Area (MPA) network and can deliver different or enhanced benefits."

In practice, this means that HPMAs will be subject to greater restrictions

than other MPAs. Activities such as commercial and recreation fishing, dredging, anchoring and mooring (except in emergency situations), and construction are likely to be banned across the entire HPMAs, unlike in MPAs.

The Secretary of State will take final decisions on sites and boundaries, and chosen sites will be designated under the Marine

"As fishing is excluded from an increasing proportion of British waters, a spatial squeeze crisis is developing. The absence of coherent policies to understand and address the issue of displacement risks profound harm for the fishing industry, for coastal communities, and for Britain's food security. We hope that the new government will take the time to listen to the people who know these areas best and who will be harmed by this poorly thought through proposal." - Mike Cohen

TIMELINE

6 July – 28 Sept 2022

Consultation on 5 shortlisted HPMAs



Post-consultation

Defra says engagement with stakeholders continues



By Christmas

Defra aims to publish summary of responses on [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk)



By 6 July 2023

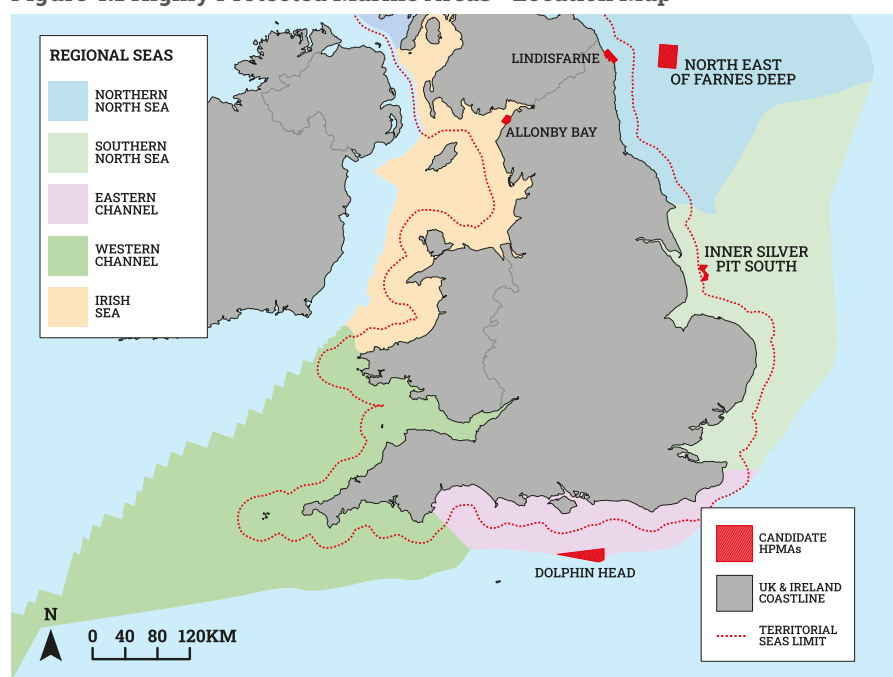
Pilot HPMAs to be designated



Post-designation

Any HPMAs fishing restrictions (eg trawls, dredges, nets, pots etc) added to Seafish services

Figure 4.1 Highly Protected Marine Areas - Location Map



Candidate HPMA	Area (km2)	Gears and target species*
Allonby Bay	39	Mainly dredge or bottom trawls for brown shrimp and king scallop using. Some potting for lobster, edible crab and whelk.
Dolphin Head	509	Mostly whelk, horse mackerel, mullet, king scallop, herring or squid are harvested using dredges, midwater trawls, Scottish seine or pots.
Inner Silver Pit South	63	Mainly harvesting edible crab, lobster, king scallop, velvet crab, brown shrimps, cockles, or whelk using pots or dredges.
Lindisfarne	129	Large vessels harvesting Norway lobster, squid, or turbot using dredges or bottom trawls. Smaller vessels harvest lobster, edible crab, or velvet crab using pots, longlines, or bottom trawls.
North-east of Farnes Deep	492	Mainly pelagic vessels targeting haddock, plaice or whiting, and some scallop dredging.

* Source for gears and target species: Seafish blog, Sept 2022.

and Coastal Act (MCAA) as Marine Conservation Zones (MCZs) with a higher conservation objective. Under the MCAA, it's possible for sites to be de-designated if there is evidence to do so.

Where are they?

The pilot HPMA's are not yet finalised, but the locations proposed by the government in summer 2022 are shown above and left. The five areas were chosen from a list of 30 'areas of ecological interest', following an assessment of possible socio-economic impacts, and some of them overlap with existing MPAs and Marine Conservation Zones (MCZs). The reasons for choosing this 5 areas are given in Defra factsheets, available at: <https://consult.defra.gov.uk/hpma/consultation-on-highly-protected-marine-areas>

The impact on fishing

According to Defra, 113 fishing vessels would be affected if all five shortlisted sites are chosen, with an annual cost to business of around £9 million. The impacts at the individual sites range from an estimated two vessels being affected at one site, up to around 57 vessels at another, though these figures are based on high-level data and analysis only and may be refined. The assessments did not consider the possible

negative impacts of these vessels being displaced nor the cost of doing business.

Fishing communities affected believe the impacts on their livelihoods are being underplayed, while the National Federation of Fishermen's Organisations (NFFO) has complained there was insufficient engagement with the fishing industry on the process of establishing

HPMA's. The NFFO's Deputy Chief Executive, Mike Cohen, comments, "HPMA's are being promoted without clear objectives, sufficient evidence, or a proper appreciation of their consequences. At a time when many people are struggling to meet the increased costs of living, a measure that will bar access to traditional grounds is an experiment the fishing families that depend on them cannot afford.

LINDISFARNE HPMA: HOW A COMMUNITY KICKED BACK

After Lindisfarne (aka 'Holy Island') was put on the HPMA shortlist, the 160 or so residents went national in their kickback against the decision – being featured on BBC news, the BBC website, the Guardian and the Sunday Telegraph, as well as local news.

Their campaign, headed by the local vicar, emphasised the heavy economic and social impact of a ban on fishing, given that "fishing families make up 15% of the island's resident population and also populate the island's primary school".

A local Conservative councillor was also quoted on the BBC website, saying,

"The last person across the causeway at night would turn the light out. Holy Island will die."

Until the pilot sites are announced in 2023, it's uncertain whether their campaign has been successful but it's interesting to see how fishers got the wider community engaged with the consultation.



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notice alerts for instant updates via
email, SMS or phone (app only).



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