



Environment Information Regulations

Acoustic Deterrent Devices and salmon farms

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For further information about the Joint Nature Conservation Committee visit:

<http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/>

Number of EIR 201817

Request

Please provide information on the use of Acoustic Deterrent Devices (ADDs) on salmon farms since 1 January 2017.

Specifically, please provide information relating to any ADD data from salmon farms inputted (or not as the case may be) into the UK Marine Noise Registry.

Please include correspondence with SNH, SARF, salmon farming companies, ADD manufacturers, Government agencies and any other parties in relation to ADD use on salmon farms.

For example, please include any information relating to the forthcoming SARF report: [Low-frequency Acoustic Deterrent Devices and Porpoises \(LEAP\): Assessing potential impact of low-frequency Acoustic Deterrent Devices \(ADDs\) on cetaceans in Scottish coastal waters](#) (more background via the [SARF project proposal dated April 2016](#)).

Please include information relating to the JNCC-authored scientific research on "[Large-scale underwater noise pollution from Acoustic Deterrent Devices \(ADDs\) on the West Coast of Scotland](#)" (presented last year at various conferences by JNCC's Charlotte Findlay and currently awaiting publication in a peer-reviewed journal).

As context, please note an email from JNCC in Aberdeen to Scottish Natural Heritage in January 2017:

From: [REDACTED]@jncc.gov.uk [REDACTED]@jncc.gov.uk
Sent: 12 January 2017 13:30
To: Caroline Carter
Cc: [REDACTED]@jncc.gov.uk
Subject: ADD use in Scotland (MSFD UK Marine Noise Registry)

Hi Caroline,

I hope you are well. I'm not sure if you will recognise me via this email, but it's [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] I have taken over the role of MSFD Noise Registry Adviser at JNCC while [REDACTED] which I believe you may have been informed about by my line manager [REDACTED]

I am emailing as I was recently informed by [REDACTED] that SNH and Marine Scotland are in talks about licensing/regulating the use of ADD at fish farms in Scottish waters. As part of the [UK Marine Noise Registry \(MNR\)](#) we are attempting to collect the time and source location of all anthropogenic impulsive noises, between 10 Hz and 10 KHz, produced in UK seas for each calendar year, but as of yet we have been unable to collect data associated with ADD use at fish farms [REDACTED].

I wondered therefore if it would be possible for me to be included in any future meetings between SNH and Marine Scotland regarding ADD use at fish farms, and to work with both organisations to try and find a feasible method of collecting future ADD noise data for the Marine Noise Registry?

Could you let me know if you think this would be possible, as we would really like to start the process of recording ADD data in the MNR to ensure our data is inclusive of all impulsive noise sources.

Best wishes,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

JNCC, Inverdee House, Baxter Street, Aberdeen, AB11 9QA

Tel: 01224 266550, Direct Dial: [REDACTED] Mobile: [REDACTED]

Email: [REDACTED]@jncc.gov.uk

My working days are: Monday to Friday



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The above email was supplied via a FOI reply from SNH dated 20 April 2018 - covering letter [online here](#) and collated data [online here](#).

It is assumed that this email was sent by [Charlotte Findlay](#) who is known to have conducted research in this field (I have attempted to copy her in here along with other Marine Noise Registry JNCC staff but please pass on directly if her email address is incorrect).

Reply

Thank you for your information request, received by JNCC on Tuesday 22nd May, which we have dealt with under the Environmental Information Regulations 2004.

In regard to the Scottish Aquaculture Research Forum Project SARF112 (*Influence of low frequency ADDs on cetaceans in Scottish coastal waters*), we would respond under EIR Regulation 12(4)(a) *Does not hold that information when an applicant's request is received*, as JNCC has not been involved in the development or management of this project.

With regard to the JNCC-authored scientific research on "*Large-scale underwater noise pollution from Acoustic Deterrent Devices (ADDs) on the West Coast of Scotland*", we would note that this was, in fact, work carried out by Charlotte Findlay as part of her MSc and JNCC did not have any input to this work, nor was it completed for JNCC. It was wrongly attributed to the JNCC in an article published by the Sunday Herald on 7th May 2017 (*Underwater alarms putting health of whales, dolphins and porpoises at risk*). JNCC's Communications Manager, Kirsty Meadows, sent an email on 9th May 2017, requesting that they print a correction (**Correction - Sunday Herald article 7 May**).

With regard to your request to provide information relating to any Acoustic Deterrent Device (ADD) data from salmon farms input to the UK Marine Noise Registry (MNR) and correspondence with SNH, SARF, salmon farming companies, ADD manufacturers, Government agencies and any other parties in relation to ADD use on salmon farms, we would respond under EIR Regulation 12(4)(d) *Relates to unfinished documents or incomplete data*.

The Marine Noise Registry does not contain any information on ADD use in salmon farms. This is a recognised gap in the data currently collected. Although there is a requirement under the MSFD to monitor impulsive noise (i.e. when and where noise occurs) and ADDs have been included in the types of noise sources to be collected, JNCC has not been able to obtain this data. We have nevertheless obtained some information on where the fish farms are and if (and what types of) ADDs are included in their suite of seal predation reduction methods. This is in the file **ADDuseScotland.xlsx**.

Currently, the Noise Registry relies entirely on data that is either collected via licence conditions or voluntarily through notification processes established with some regulators and the Ministry of Defence. Last year, JNCC started to consider how to obtain those data missing from the registry (ADDs is one amongst a series of other activities still missing) or whether it is feasible to use a proxy of the spatio-temporal extent of noise events for those missing activities. These considerations have not yet been shared with either Marine Scotland or the industry as we have yet to develop the idea fully, to a position where we can then start discussions with the relevant stakeholders. If you wish, we would be willing to hold a telephone call with you to discuss this gap in knowledge and to hear any suggestions you may have about how to obtain information on ADD use, as well as to provide any clarification on the Marine Noise Registry. Sonia Mendes, our senior marine mammal advisor, would be available for this call. Her telephone number is +44 (0) 1224 266558.

Given the above, to release all the correspondence between JNCC and SNH and/or development notes could be potentially damaging, as incomplete data or information could be misinterpreted or taken out of context and may prejudice further constructive discussion between JNCC and other stakeholders, such as Government agencies or industry, on how to obtain information on ADD use. However, we are sharing an email that states the intention to discuss this issue with Marine Scotland (**FW: Catch-up re ADDs and noise registry etc**). We are also sharing correspondence with our Northern Ireland colleague (**RE: UK Marine Noise Registry - Impulsive Noise in Northern Irish waters in 2016**), who were contacted to see what information was available for Northern Ireland. We have no correspondence with any of the other stakeholders mentioned.

We also share a JNCC-commissioned reference guide about to be published on the different types of ADDs available (**JNCC_Guide_ADD.docx**).

Please acknowledge receipt of this email and attachments. If you require any further detail please do not hesitate to contact us.

If you are unhappy with the service you have received in relation to your request and wish to make a complaint please contact Kirsty Meadows (kirsty.meadows@jncc.gov.uk).

If you are still not satisfied following this, you can make an appeal to the Information Commissioner who is the statutory regulator. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF
Telephone: 08456 30 60 60
01625 54 57 45
www.ico.gov.uk

Yours sincerely,

John Henson Webb

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