

Background to JNCC's formal conservation advice for UK offshore Special Areas of Conservation

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Introduction

What the conservation advice package includes

The detail provided in this document offers background information on JNCC's formal conservation advice package for this offshore Special Area of Conservation (hereafter referred to as the site). This forms part of JNCC's formal conservation advice package for the site and must be read in conjunction with all parts of the package as listed below:

- [Background Document](#) explaining where to find the advice package, JNCC's role in the provision of conservation advice, how the advice has been prepared, when to refer to it and how to apply it (this document);
- [Conservation Objectives](#) setting out the broad ecological aims for the site;
- [Statements on:](#)
 - the site's qualifying feature condition;
 - conservation benefits that the site can provide; and
 - conservation measures needed to support achievement of the conservation objectives set for the site.
- [Supplementary Advice on Conservation Objectives \(SACO\)](#) providing more detailed and site-specific information on the conservation objectives; and
- [Advice on Operations](#) providing information on those human activities that, if taking place within or near the site, can impact it and present a risk to the achievement of the conservation objectives.

Where to find the most up-to-date conservation advice package for the site

The most up-to-date conservation advice for this site can be downloaded from the conservation advice tab in the Site Information Centre accessible (SIC) on JNCC's [Offshore Marine Protected Areas webpage](#). By clicking on the site name in the table provided, you will be directed to the SIC.

JNCC's role in providing conservation advice

Under the Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (Habitats Directive) as transposed into the Conservation of Offshore Marine Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 specifically Regulation 21, JNCC has a statutory

obligation to establish and advise on the conservation objectives for all UK offshore SACs and on those operations capable of adversely affecting their integrity. The main aim of the Habitats Directive is to promote the maintenance of biodiversity and it is how the UK meets its obligations under the Convention on the conservation of European wildlife and natural habitats (the Bern Convention).

This conservation advice package fulfils JNCC's obligations under Regulation 21 and supports individuals who are:

- proposing to undertake an activity, within or near the site, that may affect qualifying features within it;
- preparing or providing information for a Habitats Regulations Appraisal (HRA) of an activity taking place within or near the site and that may affect qualifying features within it. You can find further guidance on undertaking HRAs in [Defra's Habitats & Birds Directive Implementation Guidance](#); and
- considering the need to implement measures to manage human activities within or near the site.

How the advice package has been prepared

The conservation advice package for this site has been developed using the best available evidence and expert interpretation in accordance with [JNCC's Evidence Quality Assurance Policy](#), following best practice as set out in [Defra's 2012 Habitats Directive Implementation Review recommendations](#) and the [European Commission's 2012 Guidance Note on setting conservation objectives](#). The advice includes information on the anticipated conservation benefits that the SAC provides locally and to the wider marine environment.

When to refer to the site's conservation advice package

You must refer to this advice package if you are:

- intending to carry out any licensed activity in or near the site and need to find out how to operate within the law;
- an authority providing advice on specific proposals; and
- an authority responsible for putting management measures in place.

You may also find it useful to refer to this advice if you are intending to carry out an activity in or near the site that does not require a license.

Using the advice package

It is important that you use the most up-to-date conservation advice. Our scientific understanding of the ecology and status of the site will change over time and the advice will be periodically updated as required to reflect this. Updates to the conservation advice package for this site will be delivered through the conservation advice tab in the Site Information Centre, accessible via JNCC's [Offshore MPAs webpage](#). Users must always refer to JNCC's website for the most up-to-date version of advice, rather than use previously downloaded (or printed) versions. Notifications of updates in conservation advice are also communicated on [JNCC's conservation advice landing page](#).

The advice package supports you in deciding whether a planned activity will have an impact in isolation or in combination with ongoing activities, on the qualifying features of the site. To assess if your activity, or one you regulate, is going to damage the site in isolation or in combination, you should:

- use the maps referred to in the Supplementary Advice on Conservation Objectives to help you determine if the planned activity or ongoing activities are in or near the site. JNCC provides information on ongoing activities which we are aware of. Please see the Activities and Management tab of the Site Information Centre for more information;
- use the advice on operations to determine those pressures that activities cause that could harm the site's qualifying features;
- screen those aspects into or out of an assessment;
- use the conservation objectives, the supplementary advice tables and statements on conservation benefits and measures to assess the impacts of the planned activity in isolation or in combination on the important attributes of the qualifying features and to understand how the conservation benefits that the site delivers to the wider marine environment may also be affected; and
- bring this together in an assessment of the overall impacts on the site.

Queries or site-specific information

Should you have any queries regarding the conservation advice for this site or know of any information pertinent to the site that we should be aware of, please contact us at

OffshoreMPAs@jncc.gov.uk