



### **Determination on the Need for Appropriate Assessment of draft fisheries Natura plan for Cockle (*Cerastoderma edule*) in Dundalk Bay 2021 - 2025**

The Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine received a draft fisheries Natura plan for Cockle (*Cerastoderma edule*) in Dundalk Bay 2021-2025, in March 2021. If implemented, the plan will set out conditions under which the cockle fishery in Dundalk Bay will operate, primarily:

- The terms under which a cockle fishery can take place, such as the minimum biomass of cockles required for the fishery to open and minimum catch rates
- Operational restrictions for participants in the fishery, such as minimum landing size of cockles, a cap on the total daily catch and the specification of gear which can be used in the fishery

Having regard to guidance from the European Commission and existing case law, the Minister has determined that the plan may have significant impacts on Natura 2000 Sites and therefore Appropriate Assessment is required in advance of determining whether or not the plan may take place.

An Appropriate Assessment report has been prepared by the Marine Institute under regulation 5(2) of [SI 290 of 2013, the European Union \(Birds and Natural Habitats\) \(Sea-fisheries\) Regulations 2013](#). The Appropriate Assessment report and appendices including the fisheries Natura plan itself will be published for a period of public consultation of six weeks. Additionally the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage, and the Minister for Environment, Climate and Communications will be provided with opportunity to make representations on the proposed fisheries Natura plan and the assessment report.

Following the receipt of any representations or submissions and in conjunction with the outcome of the Appropriate Assessment, with due consideration to the Minister's obligations under [SI 477 of 2011 European Communities \(Birds and Natural Habitats\) Regulations 2011](#), the Minister will make a determination whether or not to adopt the fisheries Natura plan.

For further information see: <http://www.fishingnet.ie/sea-fisheriesinnaturaareas/>

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