

FS007161 Fuinneamh Sceirde Teoranta - Site Investigations for the proposed Sceirde Rocks Offshore Wind Farm

Prescribed Bodies Consultation

Observations Received:

Marine Advisor Environment

Marine Advisor Engineering

Marine Institute

Irish Lights

Inland Fisheries Ireland

Sea Fisheries Protection Authority

Underwater Archaeology Unit FEMDAU / National Parks and Wildlife Service NPWS (DAU)

Marine Survey Office

Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine



Dear [REDACTED],
Foreshore Unit,
Department of the Housing, Local Government and Heritage,
Newtown Road, Co. Wexford
30th May 2023

Prescribed Bodies Consultation - Environmental Report

Re: FS007161 for site investigations for site investigation of an area 5km off the coast of County Galway.

Applicant: Fuinneamh Sceirde Teoranta

Dear [REDACTED],

Your email of the 28th April 2023 refers to this licence application for site investigation of an area 5km off the coast of County Galway.


I have reviewed the updated Natura Impact Statement dated the 14th April 2023. I would like to reiterate the importance of this area to the marine environment. It is of conservation important for marine mammals including Bottlenose dolphin, Harbour porpoise, Grey seal and Harbour seal. Kilkieran Bay has a wide diversity of benthic species and hosts the best example in Ireland of the sponge/ascidian of *Raspailia ramosa* and *Corella parallelogramma* community occurs in the deep waters of Gurraig Sound. This community has a high diversity of encrusting and branching sponges and ascidians, including the rare sponges *Plakortis simplex* and *Tricheurypon viride*. Kilkieran Bay is one of only three known localities in Ireland where the maerl species *Lithothamnion corallioides*, *Lithophyllum dentatum* and *Lithothamnion fasciculatum* co-occur. The range of maerl deposits in Kilkieran Bay, including banks of maerl debris, live maerl and mixtures of maerl, gravel and mud gives rise to a variety of communities. Within these communities are a number of rare anemones, e.g. *Scolanthus callimorphus*, *Mesacmaea mitchellii* and *Aureliania heterocera*. The last-named species is rare in Ireland, being known only from Donegal Bay and Kilkieran Bay, as well as a small number of areas on the north-east coast. The population in this site is the largest on the west coast. Kilkieran Bay is the only known Irish locality for the anemone *Mesacmaea mitchellii*. *Scolanthus callimorphus*, another anemone species, is known only from Kilkieran Bay, Valencia Harbour in Co. Kerry and the Dorset coast in the U.K. The best recorded example of the community characterised by the sea cucumber *Neopentadactyla mixta* occurs in the banks of dead maerl of Kilkieran Bay.



Conclusion/Recommendation

In principle I have no objections to this application. On completion consultation process, I will furnish my final report with determinations. These may include any case specific conditions having regard to the information obtained from the consultation phase.



, Ph.D.
Marine Advisor, Environment.

From: [REDACTED]@housing.gov.ie>

Sent: Thursday 1 June 2023 11:48

To: [REDACTED]@housing.gov.ie>

Subject: RE: Reminder FS007161 Fuinneamh Sceirde Teoranta - Site Investigations for the proposed Sceirde Rocks Offshore Wind Farm

Hi [REDACTED],

I have no further comment to make on this application.

Kind regards

[REDACTED] **C.Eng. M.Sc. M.E.I**

Marine Advisor/Inspector

National & Regional Planning Policy

An Roinn Tithíochta, Rialtais Áitiúil agus Oidhreachta
Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage

Government Buildings, Ballina, Co. Mayo, F26 E8N6

M: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]@housing.gov.ie

www.tithiocht.gov.ie

www.housing.gov.ie



An Roinn Tithíochta,
Rialtais Áitiúil agus Oidhreachta
Department of Housing,
Local Government and Heritage

From: [REDACTED]@Marine.ie>

Sent: Friday 26 May 2023 15:11

To: [REDACTED]@housing.gov.ie>

Cc: Housing ForeShoreORE <foreshoreORE@housing.gov.ie>

Subject: RE: FS007161 Fuinneamh Sceirde Teoranta - Site Investigations for the proposed Sceirde Rocks Offshore Wind Farm

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Dear [REDACTED]

The Marine Institute notes the additional information provided in the Applicants NIS document. It would appear they have addressed the information gaps identified by the Department. The Marine Institute has no other observations to make at this time.

All the best

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] PhD
Section Manager – Licensing and Policy Advice
Marine Environment and Food Safety Services
Marine Institute/Foras na Mara
Rinville, Oranmore
Galway, Ireland
H91R673

Landline: + 353 91 [REDACTED] : Mobile: +353 [REDACTED]
www.marine.ie

From: [REDACTED]@irishlights.ie>
Sent: Thursday 18 May 2023 15:43
To: [REDACTED]@housing.gov.ie>
Cc: Foreshore <foreshore@agriculture.gov.ie>
Subject: RE: FS007161 Fuinneamh Sceirde Teoranta - Site Investigations for the proposed Sceirde Rocks Offshore Wind Farm

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Good Afternoon [REDACTED],

Many thanks for your email. As we have previously responded in relation to safety of navigation, Irish Lights have no further comments to make regarding this update.

Kind Regards,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
Navigation Support Officer

.....
M: +353 [REDACTED]

Commissioners of Irish Lights

Harbour Road, Dun Laoghaire, Co. Dublin, Ireland
A96 H500

<http://www.irishlights.ie>

.....



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For a breathtaking experience where land meets sea, visit
<http://www.greatlighthouses.com>

This email and any files transmitted with it are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to whom they are addressed.

From: [REDACTED]@fisheriesireland.ie>

Sent: Thursday 11 May 2023 09:53

To: [REDACTED]@housing.gov.ie>

Cc: Housing Foreshore <foreshore@housing.gov.ie>

Subject: RE: FS007161 Fuinneamh Sceirde Teoranta - Site Investigations for the proposed Sceirde Rocks Offshore Wind Farm

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Hi [REDACTED]

We have nothing further to add to our previous comments.

Kind regards

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Senior Research Officer

 [REDACTED]@fisheriesireland.ie •  +353 (0)1 [REDACTED] •  www.fisheriesireland.ie •  D24 CK66

From: [REDACTED]@sfpa.ie>

Sent: Wednesday 7 June 2023 13:33

To: [REDACTED]@housing.gov.ie>

Subject: RE: Reminder FS007161 Fuinneamh Sceirde Teoranta - Site Investigations for the proposed Sceirde Rocks Offshore Wind Farm

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Good afternoon [REDACTED],

Please note that the SFPA has no additional comments to make regarding the proposed offshore wind farm for file FS007161.

kind regards,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
Sea Fisheries Protection Authority
Eastern Region
Auction Hall,
West Pier,
Howth,
County Dublin
Tel: +353 [REDACTED]
Fax: +353 [REDACTED]
Email: sfpahowth@sfpa.ie

From: [REDACTED]@housing.gov.ie>

Sent: Wednesday 7 June 2023 15:24

To: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Subject: RE: Reminder FS007161 Fuinneamh Sceirde Teoranta - Site Investigations for the proposed Sceirde Rocks Offshore Wind Farm

[FS007161 Fuinneamh Sceirde Teoranta - Site Investigations for the proposed Sceirde Rocks Offshore Wind Farm](#)

Dear [REDACTED],

Please note our previous obs remain and no further obs will issue from UAU. Nil response.

Kind regards,

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]@npws.gov.ie>

Sent: Thursday 8 June 2023 14:38

To: [REDACTED]@housing.gov.ie>; [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]@npws.gov.ie>

Cc: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Subject: RE: Reminder FS007161 Fuinneamh Sceirde Teoranta - Site Investigations for the proposed Sceirde Rocks Offshore Wind Farm

Hi [REDACTED]

No additional comments from NPWS

Regards

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Aonad na nIarratas ar Fhorbairt
Development Applications Unit
An Roinn Tithíochta, Rialtais Áitiúil agus Oidhreachta
Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage

Oifigí an Rialtais

Government Offices

Bóthar an Bhaile Nua, Loch Garman, Contae Loch Garman, Y35 AP90

Newtown Road, Wexford, County Wexford, Y35 AP90

www.tithiocht.gov.ie

www.housing.gov.ie

From: [REDACTED]@transport.gov.ie>

Sent: Wednesday 7 June 2023 15:06

To: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Cc: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Subject: RE: FS007161 Fuinneamh Sceirde Teoranta - Site Investigations for the proposed Sceirde Rocks Offshore Wind Farm

Good day [REDACTED],

MSO note the updated Natura Impact Statement and observations from initial review and response dated 02/02/2023 remain applicable to the project. I have included those observations below for ease and access and clarity. Upon reviewing the updated Natura Impact Statement that the applicant must ensure that points 3 and 5 are addressed although these observations are of no higher a priority than observations 1,2 4 and 6.

After careful consideration the Marine Survey Office has no objection to the above referenced application from a navigational safety perspective.

However the following points shall be of note;

1. The Licensee shall, through consultation and agreement with the Department of Transport, Marine Survey Office and Commissioners of Irish Lights, arrange for the publication of a Marine Notice through the Maritime Safety Policy Division.
2. The promulgation and frequency of Navtex and radio broadcast warnings shall be agreed in advance with the Irish Coast Guard for the duration of the license period.
3. The marking and lighting of any moored instruments shall be carried out in consultation with the Marine Survey Office and Commissioners of Irish Lights. Lighting and marking shall be compliant with International Association of Aids to Navigation (IALA) requirements. Information regarding the position of any markings which create a hazard to navigation shall be promulgated to the mariner via publication of a marine notice and all available means appropriate.
4. The Licensee shall ensure all appropriate measures are taken for the duration of any on-site activity to ensure the safety of navigation is maintained. Any hazard to safe navigation shall be easily identifiable to all mariners operating within or in the vicinity of the license area.
5. All vessels engaged in the above must conform to Irish Certification standards and the vessels be manned by suitably qualified personnel, additionally where equipment is carried an Irish Load line survey may be required. The applicant should contact the Marine Survey Office Dublin for clarification in relation to the above matters.
6. On completion of operations the applicant shall be obliged to inform the United Kingdom Hydrographic Office (UKHO) providing bathymetry data so that appropriate charts can be updated. (Fax: 0044 1823 284077, email: hdc@hdc.hydro.gov.uk)

Regards,
[REDACTED]

Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM) Ref: FW.12.26

Fuinneamh Sceirde Teoranta, Site Investigations for the proposed Sceirde Rocks Offshore Wind Farm Export Cable Corridor (DHLGH Ref: FS007543)

and

Fuinneamh Sceirde Teoranta, Site Investigations for the proposed Sceirde Rocks Offshore Wind Farm (DHLGH Ref: FS007161)

31/05/2023

Inshore sea-fisheries observations:

1. The lack of VMS data regarding fishing in or near the application area should not be considered representative of the activities of the inshore segment of the fishing fleet. There are up to 1,700 vessels in the inshore segment, which is defined as sea-fishing boats less than 12 metres in length. Such vessels are not required to carry VMS systems, hence the lack of VMS data to show the sea-fishing activities of inshore vessels. This lack of VMS data cannot be taken to mean that inshore vessels do not fish in or near the application area. In fact, the Marine Institute has advised: *“There is likely to be considerable effort by smaller vessels (<12m without VMS) that cannot be quantified here. Mainly using pots targeting crab and lobster this area.”*
2. DAFM recommends that a Fisheries Liaison Officer (FLO) be appointed for the project if this has not already been done.
 - DAFM would urge that timely consultation and active engagement with the representatives of inshore fishers take place as early as possible and on an ongoing basis to ensure optimum coordination of activities and to limit disturbance (and avoid displacement) of inshore fishing activity as much as possible during the proposed surveys.
 - Consultation should follow the good practice Engagement Standards in the document *Summary Guide on Seafood / ORE Engagement in Ireland*. This document was developed by the Seafood/Offshore Renewable Energy (ORE) Working Group to provide ORE projects and seafood stakeholders with guidance on how to engage and co-exist in a meaningful and constructive manner throughout the lifecycle of an ORE Project. An open and clear dialogue with fishers’ representatives should assist in reducing the potential for confusion and friction with fishing stakeholders.
3. DAFM strongly recommends that the applicants consult with the organisations listed at point 6 below as well as the Marine Institute for further information on the inshore fishing that actually takes place in or near the application area. Certain inshore boats are required to carry GPS monitoring systems, which are provided by the MI. That agency may have gathered data from these GPS units that could be relevant to the application area. Also, the MI publishes information on inshore fisheries in reports such as its annual [Shellfish Stocks and Fisheries Review](#).
4. As the proposed development of this and other ORE projects continue, it is essential that the sea-fisheries sector is recognised and given a high priority as a long-standing, pre-existing, and traditional activity in the marine environment. Fishers are primary food producers dependent upon certain marine areas which are particularly important for food production. This primary production is critical to supplying the downstream indigenous seafood processing and export industries and in sustaining the livelihoods of coastal communities. The importance of these primary and secondary food production activities is reflected in the Government’s Food Vision 2030 policy.
5. The potential impacts of ORE projects on commercial sea-fishing and aquaculture activities need to be considered and evaluated at each stage of the consent process. Where commercial sea-fishing (and aquaculture activities) may be impacted, it is essential that early, effective

and ongoing engagement takes place with stakeholders to afford them an opportunity for input/preparation. The principles in the National Marine Planning Framework (NMPF) of avoiding, minimising, or mitigating impacts on access to existing activities should be followed. Ideally, the design of ORE projects should incorporate the principle of maximising “co-use” of marine areas with existing activities, such as inshore fishing, to minimise the impacts of ORE projects on those activities.

6. Organisations representing inshore vessels (<12 metres in length operating within six nautical miles of the shore) include:
 - The National Inshore Fisheries Forum (NIFF): <https://inshoreforums.ie/niff/>;
 - The West Regional Inshore Fisheries Forum (WRIFF):
<https://inshoreforums.ie/west-overview/>
 - The Irish Islands Marine Resource Organisation (IIMRO): <https://www.iimro.org/>;
 - The National Inshore Fishermen’s Association (NIFA): <https://inshore.ie/>.

Ends

Fuinneamh Sceirde Teoranta

3 Gullane Cottages, Clonakilty, Co Cork P85R260

31ST May 2023

Re: FS007161 Fuinneamh Sceirde Teoranta - Site Investigations for the proposed Sceirde Rocks Offshore Wind Farm, Co Galway

Dear Sir/Madam,

The following are the comments from this Division in relation to the proposed development:

If the proposed development will involve the felling or removal of any trees, the developer must obtain a Felling License from this Department before trees are felled or removed. A Felling Licence application form can be obtained from **Felling Section, Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Johnstown Castle Estate, Co. Wexford**. Email: felling.forests@agriculture.gov.ie or Web [gov.ie - Tree Felling Licences \(www.gov.ie\)](http://gov.ie - Tree Felling Licences (www.gov.ie))

A Felling Licence granted by the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine provides authority under the Forestry Act 2014 to fell or otherwise remove a tree or trees and/or to thin a forest for silvicultural reasons. The Act prescribes the functions of the Minister and details the requirements, rights and obligations in relation to felling licences. The principal set of regulations giving further effect to the Forestry Act 2014 are the Forestry Regulations 2017 (S.I. No. 191 of 2017).

The developer should take note of the contents of **Felling and Reforestation Policy** document which provide a consolidated source of information on the legal and regulatory framework relating to tree felling; [gov.ie - Tree Felling Licences \(www.gov.ie\)](http://gov.ie - Tree Felling Licences (www.gov.ie)) As this development is within forest lands, particular attention should be paid to deforestation, turbulence felling and the requirement to afforest alternative lands.

In order to ensure regulated forestry operations in Ireland accord with the principles of sustainable forest management (SFM), as well fulfilling the requirements of other relevant environmental protection laws, the Department (acting through its Forest Service division) must undertake particular consultations, and give certain matters full consideration during the assessment of individual Felling Licence applications. This includes consultation with relevant bodies, the application of various protocols and procedures (e.g. Forest Service Appropriate Assessment Procedure), and the requirement for applicants on occasion to provide further information (e.g. a Natura Impact Statement).

Consequently, when the Forest Service is considering an application to fell trees, the following applies:

1. The interaction of these proposed works with the environment locally and more widely, in addition to potential direct and indirect impacts on designated sites and water, is assessed. Consultation with relevant environmental and planning authorities may be required where specific sensitivities arise (e.g. local authorities, National Parks & Wildlife Service, Inland Fisheries Ireland, and the National Monuments Service);
2. Where a tree Felling Licence application is received, the Department will publish a notice of the application before making a decision on the matter. The notice shall state that any person may make a submission to the Department within 30 days from the date of the notice. The notices are published online at: [gov.ie - Felling Licence Applications \(www.gov.ie\)](http://gov.ie - Felling Licence Applications (www.gov.ie))

3. Third parties that make a submission or observation will be informed of the decision to grant or refuse the licence, and on request, details of the conditions attached to the licence, the main reasons and considerations on which the decision to grant or refuse the licence was based, and where conditions are attached to any licence, the reasons for the conditions. Both third parties and applicants will be also informed of their right to appeal any decision within 14 days to the Forestry Appeals Committee. Felling Licence decision are published online at: [gov.ie - Felling Licence Decisions \(www.gov.ie\)](http://gov.ie - Felling Licence Decisions (www.gov.ie))

It is important to note that when applying to a **Local Authority**, or **An Bord Pleanála**, for planning permission where developments are:

- a) subject to an EIA procedure (including screening in the case of a sub-threshold development) and any resulting requirement to produce an EIAR; and/or
- b) subject to an Appropriate Assessment procedure (including screening) and any resulting requirement to a Natura Impact Statement (NIS); and
- c) the proposed development in its construction or operational phases, or any works ancillary thereto, would directly or indirectly involve the felling and replanting of trees, deforestation for the purposes of conversion to another type of land use, or replacement of broadleaf high forest by conifer species,
 1. that there is a requirement inter alia under the EIA Directive for an overall assessment of the effects of the project or the alteration thereof on the environment to be undertaken, including the direct and indirect environmental impact of the project;and
 2. pursuant to Article 2(3) of the EIA Directive, the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine strongly recommends that, notwithstanding the fact that a parallel consent in the form of felling licence may also have to be applied for, any EIAR and/or NIS produced in connection with the application for planning permission to the Local Planning Authority or An Bord Pleanála, should include an assessment of the impact of and measures, as appropriate, to prevent, mitigate or compensate for any significant adverse effects direct or indirect identified on the environment arising from such felling and replanting of trees, deforestation for the purposes of conversion to another type of land use, or replacement of broadleaf high forest by conifer species.
3. Please note that there must be absolute spatial consistency between the felling licence areas submitted to DAFM (second authority) and all related planning documents submitted to the first authority in respect of the felling area(s)

Yours sincerely,



Felling Section
Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine