



BY EMAIL ONLY

1 February 2021

Dear stakeholder,

### **Formal consultation on a draft MMO byelaw for the Dogger Bank Special Area of Conservation (SAC)**

The Marine Management Organisation (MMO) is seeking views on a draft byelaw to manage fishing in the Dogger Bank SAC.

This letter provides a background to the SAC and the role of the MMO, a brief summary of known fishing activity in the site, the proposed management measure, supplementary information, and information on how to respond to formal consultation and what to expect next.

### **Background**

Dogger Bank SAC was formally designated in September 2017. The site has one designated feature:

- Sandbanks which are slightly covered by seawater all the time

A map showing the Dogger Bank SAC and the location of the habitat types (known as 'sub-features') making up the sandbank is provided at the end of this letter.

The conservation objectives set for the Dogger Bank SAC are set out on the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) Site Information Centre as:

For the feature to be in favourable condition thus ensuring site integrity in the long term and contribution to favourable conservation status of Annex I sandbanks which are slightly covered by seawater all the time. This contribution would be achieved by maintaining or restoring, subject to natural change:

- The extent and distribution of the qualifying habitat in the site;
- The structure and function of the qualifying habitat in the site; and
- The supporting processes on which the qualifying habitat relies.



JNCC advises a combination of 'maintain' and 'restore' targets for different attributes of the sandbanks which are slightly covered by seawater all the time feature.

### **Maritime boundaries**

The Dogger Bank SAC lies in English offshore (from 12-200 nm) waters and is adjacent to the median line with Dutch waters.

### **MMO duties and powers**

The MMO has duties under the Conservation of Offshore Marine Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 to ensure that the SAC is protected from damaging activities.

The MMO has powers under the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 to introduce byelaws to manage fishing for the conservation of marine flora, fauna or habitats.

### **Summary of fishing activity within the site**

Analysis of vessel monitoring system (VMS) information indicates that the main fishing activities within the Dogger Bank SAC are from bottom towed gear, including trawling and seining vessels. There has been little previous evidence of scallop dredging occurring within the site, however, there has been a rapid increase in this activity since mid-2020. Other fishing activities occurring, albeit less frequently, include fixed gill nets and potting. Vessels that fish within the SAC include those from the UK, Denmark, the Netherlands, Belgium, Sweden, France, Germany, Ireland, and Norway.

Further analysis of fishing activity within the site is available in the Dogger Bank SAC MMO Fisheries Assessment.

### **MMO assessment**

The MMO assessment of fishing impacts at this site (Dogger Bank Special Area of Conservation Marine Management Organisation (MMO) Fisheries Assessment), taking into account advice from JNCC, concluded that bottom towed fishing (demersal trawl including semi-pelagic, demersal seine and dredging) on the sandbank may result in adverse effect on site integrity.

### **Proposed management**

The proposed management measure in the draft byelaw is a prohibition on all bottom towed fishing, including demersal and semi-pelagic trawls, demersal seines and dredges throughout the SAC, and a small buffer area around the SAC.

This management measure will apply equally to fishing vessels from the UK and from any other country with fishing access rights.

A map showing the proposed management option for Dogger Bank SAC is provided at the end of this letter.

## Documents

All supporting documentation including the draft byelaw, associated regulatory triage assessment, the site's fisheries assessment and all relevant maps can be found [here](#) or via the link within the cover email.

## Questions to consider

Please provide us with any information you feel could be relevant to inform our assessment and decision for management at this site. In particular we are interested in understanding the following:

- Do you have any additional information about the location, condition or sensitivity of the designated feature and/or its sub-features?
- Do you have information about the level or nature of fishing activity within the site?
  - What fishing gears are commonly used?
  - How regularly are each of these gears used?
  - What is the approximate size of each of the gears being used?
  - What species do each of these gears target?
  - What species are caught as bycatch by each of these gears?
  - What are the other environmental effects of these gears?
- How would the proposed management option affect you? (Please provide evidence of this impact if possible)
- What other effects will the proposed management option have?

## How to respond

Please respond no later than **28 March 2021**. You can respond by completing our online survey by visiting: <https://consult.defra.gov.uk/mmo/formal-consultation-mmo-mpa-assessments/>

If you are not able to access the above survey, you can respond via the details below. Due to the current COVID-19 situation we are asking all stakeholders to use email rather than post if possible.

Copies of the byelaw may also be inspected at any MMO office. Due to the current COVID-19 situation, please contact MMO using the details below if you wish to inspect a copy of the draft byelaw at an MMO office.

By email: [conservation@marinemanagement.org.uk](mailto:conservation@marinemanagement.org.uk)

By telephone: 0300 123 1032

In writing:

Dogger Bank SAC Formal Consultation  
Marine Conservation Team  
Marine Management Organisation  
Lancaster House  
Newcastle upon Tyne  
NE4 7YH

## **Next steps**

We will use the information received during this formal consultation period, alongside other information (including analysis of academic literature, fishing logbooks, vessel monitoring system data), to make a decision on the most appropriate fisheries management measure for Dogger Bank SAC.

More information on the MMO byelaw making process can be found at [www.gov.uk/guidance/marine-conservation-byelaws](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/marine-conservation-byelaws)

If you have any further questions or queries, please email [conservation@marinemanagement.org.uk](mailto:conservation@marinemanagement.org.uk) or call the MMO helpline on: 0300 123 1032.

Yours faithfully,

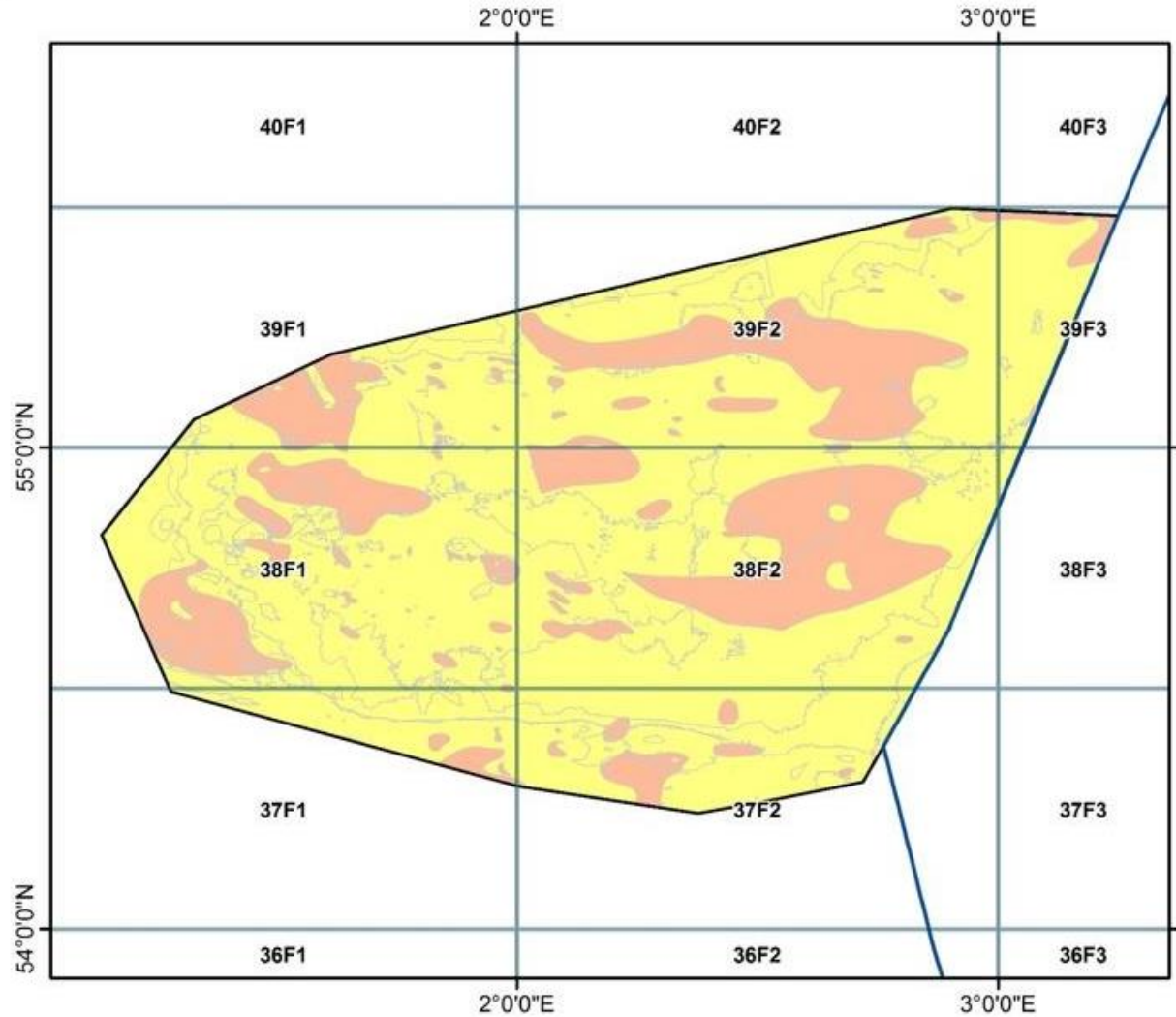
Tom Barnfield  
Marine Conservation Manager  
Marine Conservation Team  
Marine Management Organisation



Marine  
Management  
Organisation

# Dogger Bank Special Area of Conservation

## Designated features

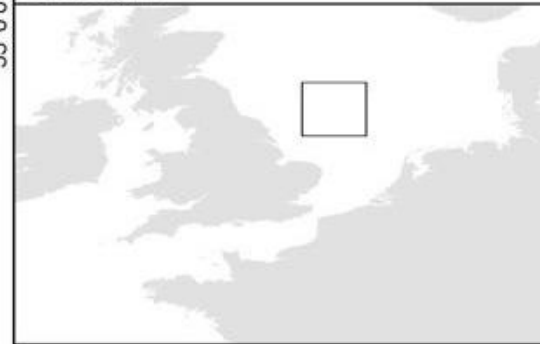


- UK EEZ
- ICES Statistical Rectangles
- Dogger Bank SAC

- Habitat Type**
- Subtidal coarse sediment (A5.1) [H1110]
  - Subtidal sand (A5.2) [H1110]
  - Subtidal mixed sediment (A5.4) [H1110]

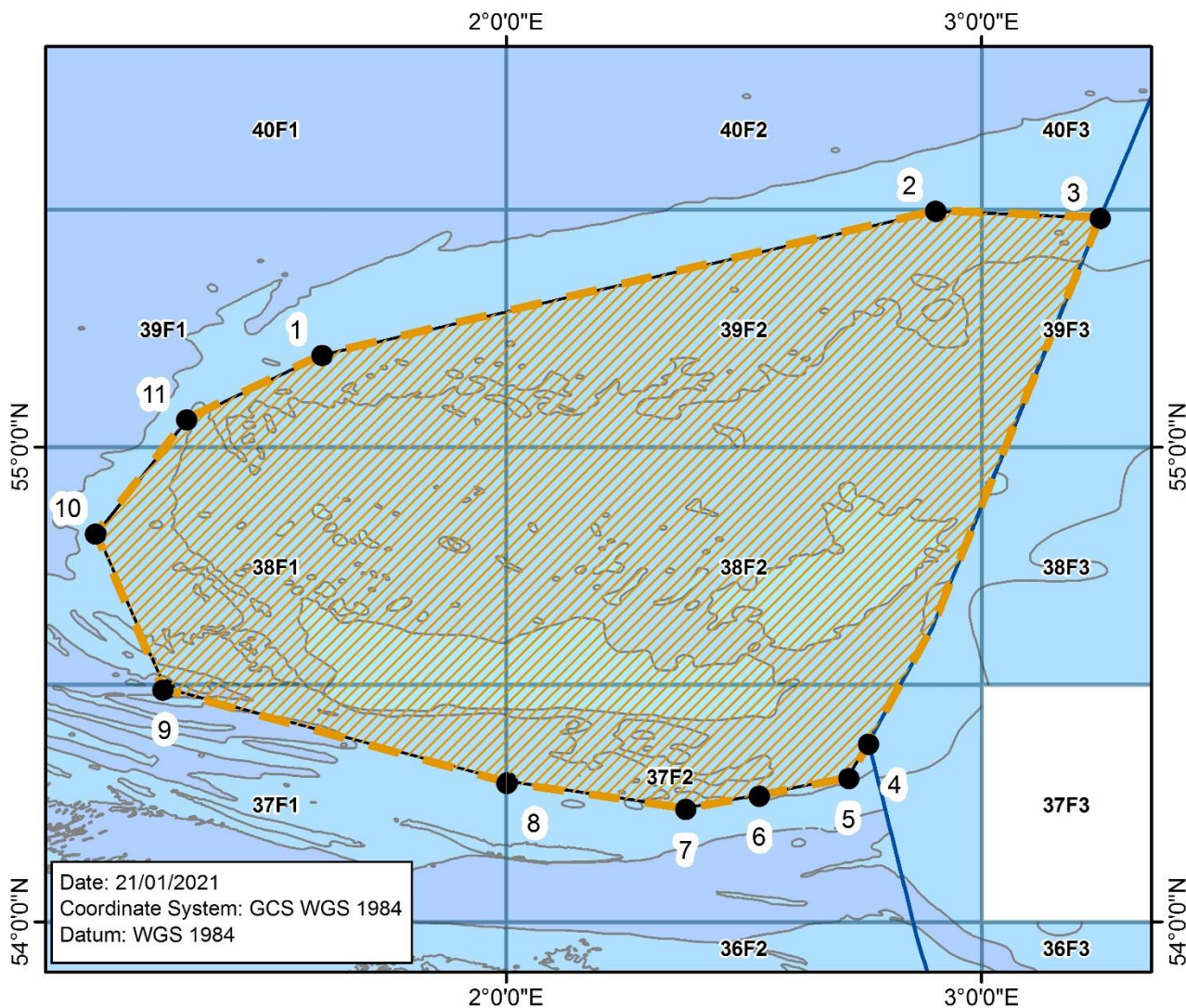
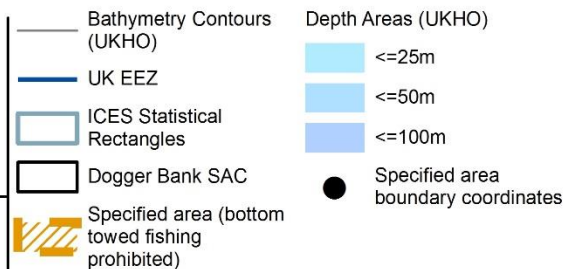
Habitat data clipped to site

Date: 27/08/2020  
Coordinate System: GCS ETRS 1989  
Datum: ETRS 1989  
Units: Degree

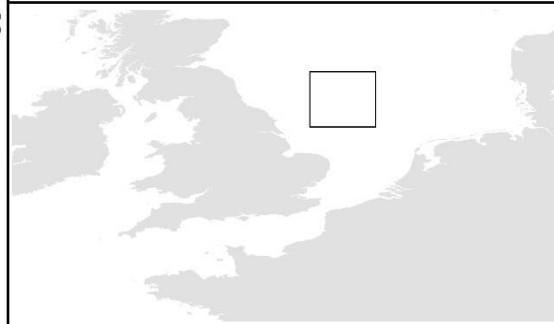


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# Dogger Bank Special Area of Conservation (Specified Area) Bottom Towed Fishing Gear Byelaw 2021



Point	Latitude	Longitude
1	55° 11' 42.08" N	1° 36' 44.33" E
2	55° 29' 54.67" N	2° 54' 13.37" E
3	55° 29' 1.35" N	3° 15' 1.21" E
4	54° 22' 34.78" N	2° 45' 45.53" E
5	54° 18' 14.87" N	2° 43' 14.79" E
6	54° 16' 0.07" N	2° 31' 55.66" E
7	54° 14' 20.45" N	2° 22' 39.16" E
8	54° 17' 38.18" N	2° 0' 5.77" E
9	54° 29' 26.25" N	1° 16' 38.33" E
10	54° 49' 7.89" N	1° 8' 7.69" E
11	55° 3' 33.3" N	1° 19' 37.24" E



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