

2nd November 2012

Dear Stakeholder,

RE: 2012 CONSULTATION ON THE SELECTION OF FIVE SPECIAL AREAS OF CONSERVATION IN THE SCOTTISH OFFSHORE REGION – ANTON DOHRN SEAMOUNT, EAST ROCKALL BANK, HATTON BANK, POBIE BANK REEF & SOLAN BANK REEF

I am writing to inform you of the outcome of the Joint Nature Conservation Committee's and Scottish Natural Heritage's 2012 public consultation on the selection of five Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) at Anton Dohrn Seamount, East Rockall Bank, Hatton Bank, Pobie Bank Reef* and Solan Bank Reef*.

As required by Regulation 8 (4) of the Offshore Marine Conservation (Natural Habitats, & c.) Regulations 2007 (as amended), the JNCC (and SNH for the two joint inshore/offshore sites as marked above with a *) has compiled a report which describes the representations made during the consultation, and summarises JNCC's and SNH's recommendations to take account of responses received. This report and associated documents are now available online (see details below).

In total, 12 individuals and organisations responded to the consultation, with respect to both the science underpinning each site identification and the socio-economic costs and benefits of each site to inform the Impact Assessment. JNCC and SNH have taken account of representations made during the consultation and have made the following changes to the original recommendations:

1. The SAC Selection Assessment document for each site have been amended to take account of comments received;
2. The Impact Assessment for each site has been updated to incorporate new or updated information provided by consultees.

The feature for which each site is identified ('reefs') have not been changed as a result of the responses received during the consultation. The site boundaries have not changed for Anton Dohrn Seamount, East Rockall Bank, Hatton Bank and Solan Bank Reef. However, following some responses received the boundaries around Pobie Bank Reef have been slightly amended.

The report of the consultation outlining the responses received and revisions that were made to the sites post-consultation, is available on our website at jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-4169. Also available at the same location are JNCC's accompanying Final Impact Assessment for each site. The SAC Selection Assessment document and GIS boundaries for each site are available from our website at jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-4534.

The Anton Dohrn Seamount SAC, East Rockall Bank SAC, Hatton Bank SAC, Pobie Bank Reef SAC and Solan Bank Reef SAC proposals have been submitted to the European Commission and are now candidate SACs (cSAC). A register of European offshore marine sites is maintained by Defra on behalf of the Secretary of State and is available for public inspection. The information contained in the Register, and the Natura 2000 dataform

submitted to the EC, plus other more general information on SACs are all available from JNCC's website at jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-4.

The draft Conservation Objectives and Advice on Operations documents for each of the five sites have not yet been amended and the documents are still available (at the website location above). The Conservation Objectives and Advice on Operations documents will be updated in the coming months incorporating comments received, and will be formally issued to Competent and Relevant Authorities.

Further information on the SAC Selection Process for the offshore SACs can be found on our website jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-4165. If you have difficulties accessing documents on our website we can provide all the documents on a CD - please send an email with 'Documents request: 2012 Offshore SAC Consultation report' in the subject line to offshoreconsult@jncc.gov.uk, or contact Alice Cornthwaite on 01733 866859. Should you have further questions which are not answered by the information that is provided on our website then please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ollie Payne', written in a cursive style.

Ollie Payne
Senior Marine Protected Areas Adviser, JNCC