



North Morecambe Bay / Walney Channel Seed Mussel Dredge Fishery – Extension Area B

Code of Practice

To avoid risk to the cobble and boulder reef community conservation features of the Morecambe Bay and Duddon Estuary Special Area of Conservation (SAC) the points listed below should be followed by any person using a dredge to remove seed mussel from Area B in the North Morecambe Bay / Walney Channel seed mussel dredge fishery:

- dredging must not take place on areas of exposed rock or rocky skewer substrate;
- to verify dredging does not take place on rock or skewer substrate all dredge locations need to be mapped with Acoustic Ground Discrimination System* (AGDS) which identifies the location of seed mussel beds prior to dredging taking place;
- vessel/dredge tracks overlain on this data should be submitted, in a digital format, to the NWIFCA within two days of fishing;
- vessel operators must accommodate an observer(s) from Natural England and / or NWIFCA on request.

**Acoustic Ground Discrimination System – in this instance refers to systems which use an echo sounder to measure acoustic backscatter and reflection characteristics in the form of roughness and hardness of the seabed. Example systems would be RoxAnn and Echoplus.*

CONTACTS:

NWIFCA – 01524 727970

Natural England - 0300 060 2122

Explanatory Note

This Code of Practice was developed in conjunction with advice from Natural England in order to authorise an extension (Area B) of dredge harvest to an area (Area A) of ephemeral seed mussel in North Morecambe Bay / Walney Channel while minimising the potential risk to important conservation features.

Area B is lacking in habitat data and therefore the use of AGDS will not only provide real-time information to dredge operators to ensure they avoid sensitive habitats, but also provide further data to the NWIFCA and Natural England on the substrate / habitat type within the authorised extension Area B.

By signing this Code of Practice you confirm you have read and agree to abide by the points listed above.

Please sign and date this Code of Practice, scan it and email it to: b.vause@nw-ifca.gov.uk

Signed:

Position in Company:

Date: