

MI Observations on MUL230036 – Salvage operation of the cargo of the SS Ohio

Jonathan White – Marine Institute – Version 1 – 18/December/2025

Summary

The Seafood Environment Unit of DAFM requested MI observations in relation to an application made to MARA by SEATEC, to undertake salvage operations from the seafloor of the cargo ship the SS-Ohio, a World War I era steamship for commercial purposes with salvaged materials, primarily non-ferrous metals such as brass and copper, to be processed and sold.

“The proposed maritime usage involves the salvage operation of the cargo of the SS-Ohio, a World War I era steamship located 142 NM from the Irish territorial waters at a depth of 330 meters. The objective is to retrieve non-ferrous metals from the wreck site while ensuring minimal environmental impact.”

Operations are requested for use of temporary salvage equipment including a 100-ton crane, mechanical grabs and submarine ROVs, for a licence duration of 2 years to accommodate salvage operations depending on weather conditions.

An SISAA report is included in the application that concludes

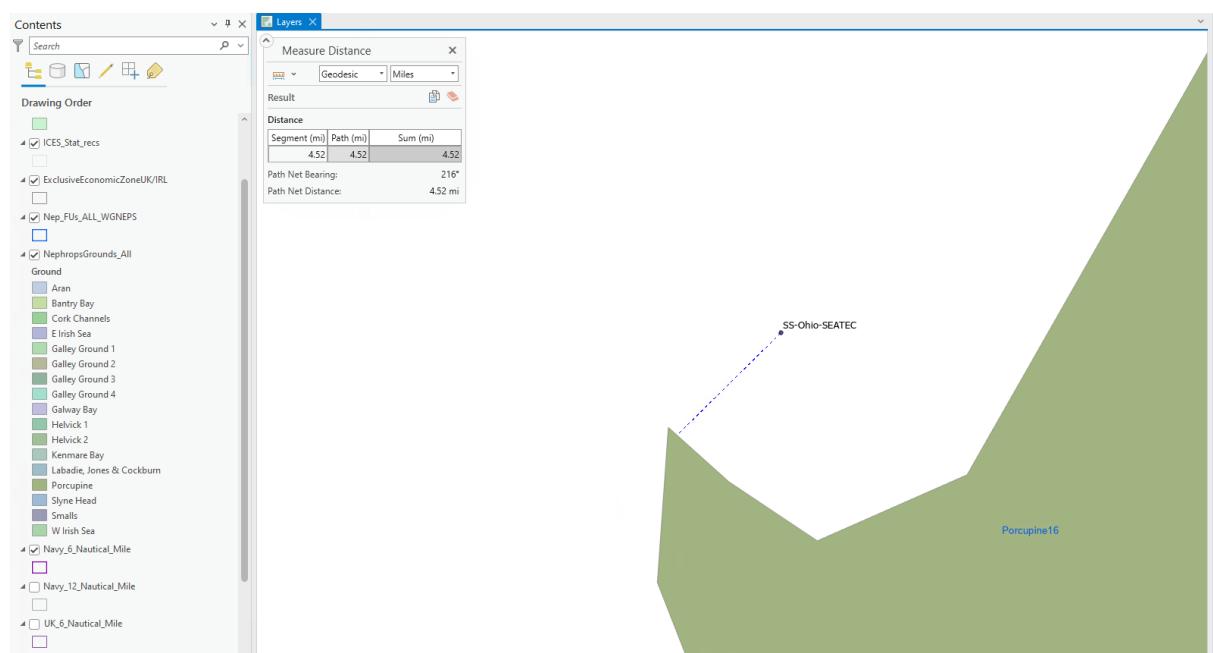
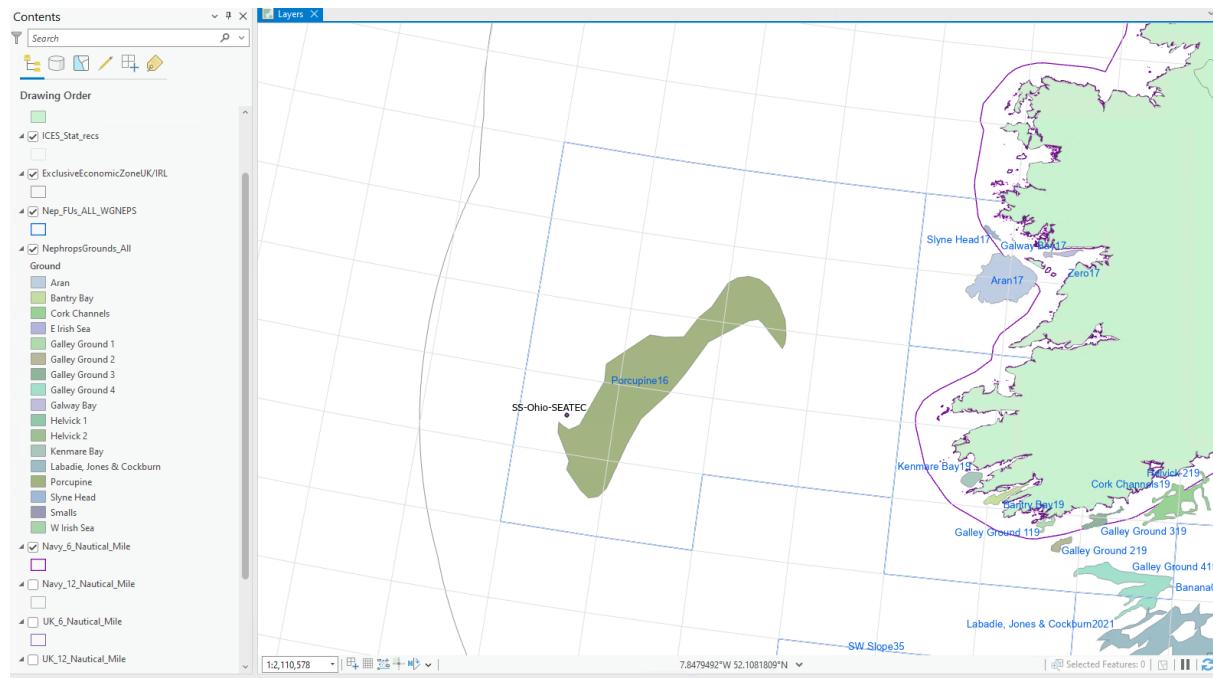
“Based on the assessment, the project is unlikely to have significant effects on Natura 2000 sites. Therefore, a full Appropriate Assessment (AA) is not deemed necessary at this stage.”

There is ambiguity regarding the position provided, stated in the application as: “Latitude: 51°N 52720 Longitude: 014°W 16880” without indication of decimal Degrees or Degrees-Minutes-Seconds, further in “MUL230036-Map-observation.pdf” as a range of lat longs that repeat and in MUL230036-Enhanced-Chart.pdf as what appear to be Eastings and Northings but are not specified. With no obvious translations this makes it difficult to ascertain the exact location of proposed activities.

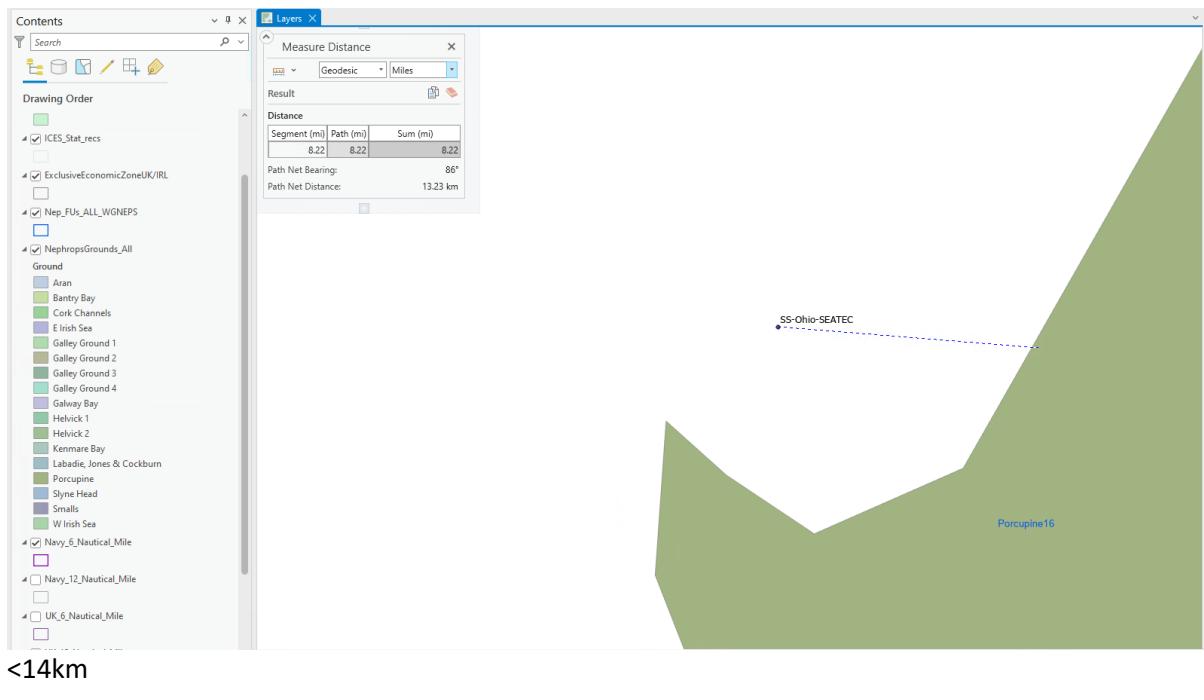
Irelands Marine Atlas states the SS-Ohio as located at “DDLat: 51.75, DDLon: -14.5. plotting these positions indicates the wreck in close proximity to the northern edge of the Porcupine Bank *Nephrops* fishing grounds, Functional Unit 16. Within approx. less than 5 miles (7km) to the south west and <9 miles (<14km) to the east. Plots below.

Further, the “Deep-sea access regulation” identifies areas along the shelf edge, closed to fishing activities owing the presence of Vulnerable Marine Ecosystems (VMEs) and in close proximity to the anticipated positional information of the SS-Ohio. (Council Regulation (EC) No 2347/2002: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2016/2336/oi/eng>). It may be prudent to check locations. Plots below.

The positional information should be confirmed with the requestors. Assuming the target is outside FU16 and appropriate notices to mariners are given, it is anticipated there would be no lasting impact on fish stocks or fishing activities. The close proximity to VME Area 51 should be checked.



<7km



Proximity to VME area 51, Deep Sea Regulation.

