

# MI Observations on MUL230038- MARA- Ballyness Bay, Falcarragh, Co. Donegal.

Jonathan White – Marine Institute – Version 1 – 28/10/2025

## Summary

The Seafood Climate Unit of DAFM requested MI observations on possible impacts that Marine Usage Licence ref: MUL240026 might have on the seafood sector, i.e. fish stocks, fisheries, aquaculture, or the environments on which they rely. The application submitted on behalf of Uisce Eireann in application for a maritime usage license to conduct marine survey work within Ballyness Bay, Falcarragh, Co. Donegal, in support of a Model Scoping Report to inform the outfall discharge location for a proposed upgrade to Falcarragh Water Treatment Plant, County Donegal.

The proposed surveys are to inform design and consenting of wastewater infrastructure to facilitate growth of communities, including provision of housing.

Proposed monitoring operations include seafloor mounted current meters, near-bed temperature and salinity sensors, tide gauges attached to an existing fixed structures or the seabed housed in weighted or anchored frame, water quality sampling *via* buoys or remotely controlled boat. Water samples taken manually and/or by automatic sampler depending on access. Survey equipment will be in place for a temporary period only and removed after completion of the survey. A license duration of five years is sought.

Some of the survey area, totalling 55 km<sup>2</sup>, adjoins to the shore,  
Submission includes:

- Supporting information for screening for Appropriate Assessment
- Assessment of Impact on the Maritime Usage Report
- Annex IV Species Risk Assessment

Having reviewed the MUL application documents, FEAS notes the site overlaps or is in close proximity to *circa* 3 marine/coastal SACs and 2 SPAs (see <https://dafm-maps.marine.ie/aquaculture-viewer/>). The application notes aquaculture licences in place within the proposed survey area.

Independently, the proposed survey operations should not substantially interfere with fish stocks, fishing activities or aquaculture activities in the area. It is assumed that the necessary notices to mariners / fishing vessels will be made regarding the deployment of seafloor monitoring devices.

The indicated areas are coincidental with spawning and nursery grounds of a range of commercial fish species, including:

Cod Nursery; Herring Spawning Area; Horse Mackerel Nursery Ground; Mackerel Nursery Ground; Whiting Spawning Ground.

There is potential for cumulative impacts between these and other survey activities that may be active in the local vicinity and/or near timeframes.