

Wexford County Council,  
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By email only [specialprojects@wexfordcoco.ie](mailto:specialprojects@wexfordcoco.ie) & [Laura.Lynch@rod.ie](mailto:Laura.Lynch@rod.ie)

21/09/2026

**Request for revised Natura Impact Statement under section 117(6)(a) of the Maritime Area Planning Act 2021**

**Maritime Usage Licence Application Reference: MUL260005**

Dear applicant,

I refer to the above referenced Maritime Usage Licence (MUL) received by the Maritime Area Regulatory Authority (MARA), which included a Natura Impact Statement.

Following screening pursuant to Regulation 42 of the *European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (S.I. 477 of 2011)*, MARA made a determination on 18/09/2026 that an appropriate assessment is required to be carried out in respect of the proposed maritime usage which is the subject of this MUL application.

The Appropriate Assessment Screening Determination is available on the MARA website at the following link: [MUL260005](#)

For the purposes of the Appropriate Assessment, you are required to prepare a revised **Natura Impact Statement (NIS)** to match the conservation features screened I for AA as part of the MARA AA screening report.

The revised Natura Impact Statement is to address the following matters:

| European Site                    | Conservation feature                                                                                              | Reason for screening in                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Slaney River Valley SAC [000781] | Estuaries [1130]; Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140]; Atlantic salt meadows [1330] | The works overlap Estuaries, while potential mudflat habitat and Atlantic salt meadow were recorded along the project boundary. Physical habitat disturbance and water-quality effects from boreholes, grab sampling and |

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2nd Floor, Menapia House, Drinagh Business Park, Drinagh, Wexford, Y35RF29.

**email:**

[licence@mara.gov.ie](mailto:licence@mara.gov.ie)

**website:**

[www.maritimeregulator.ie](http://www.maritimeregulator.ie)

| European Site                           | Conservation feature                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Reason for screening in                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|-----------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | jack-up barge operations could not be excluded.                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Slaney River Valley SAC [000781]        | Freshwater Pearl Mussel [1029]; Brook Lamprey [1096]                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Potential water-quality effects on these species and their supporting habitat could not be excluded. The determination also identifies possible underwater-noise effects.                                                    |
| Slaney River Valley SAC [000781]        | Otter [1355]                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Otter occur in the Lower Slaney Estuary, and visual and above-water noise disturbance from bathymetric surveying and borehole activities could not be excluded.                                                              |
| Wexford Harbour and Slobbs SPA [004076] | Little Grebe [A004]; Great Crested Grebe [A005]; Cormorant [A017]; Grey Heron [A028]; Bewick's Swan [A037]; Whooper Swan [A038]; Light-bellied Brent Goose [A046]; Shelduck [A048]; Teal [A052]; Mallard [A053]; Pintail [A054]; Scaup [A062]; Goldeneye [A067]; Red-breasted Merganser [A069]; Hen Harrier [A082]; Coot [A125]; Oystercatcher [A130]; Golden Plover [A140]; Grey Plover [A141]; Lapwing [A142]; Knot [A143]; Sanderling [A144]; Dunlin [A149]; Black-tailed Godwit [A156]; Bar-tailed Godwit [A157]; Curlew [A160]; Redshank [A162]; Black-headed Gull [A179]; Lesser Black-backed Gull [A183]; Greenland White-fronted Goose [A395]; | The works directly overlap the SPA and supporting estuarine habitat. Visual and above-water noise disturbance from vessel, barge and survey activities, and underwater-noise effects on diving birds, could not be excluded. |

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| European Site                       | Conservation feature                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Reason for screening in                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                     | Wigeon [A855]; Little Tern [A885];<br>Wetland and Waterbirds [A999]                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| The Raven SPA<br>[004019]           | Red-throated Diver [A001];<br>Cormorant [A017]; Common<br>Scoter [A065]; Grey Plover [A141];<br>Sanderling [A144]; Greenland<br>White-fronted Goose [A395]                                                                                                                                                                                       | The project area lies within the<br>potential foraging ranges of these SCIs.<br>Visual and above-water noise<br>disturbance, together with<br>underwater-noise effects on diving<br>birds, could not be excluded.               |
| Seas off<br>Wexford SPA<br>[004237] | Red-throated Diver [A001];<br>Cormorant [A017]; Shag [A018];<br>Common Scoter [A065];<br>Mediterranean Gull [A176]; Black-<br>headed Gull [A179]; Lesser Black-<br>backed Gull [A183]; Herring Gull<br>[A184]; Roseate Tern [A192];<br>Common Tern [A193]; Arctic Tern<br>[A194]; Guillemot [A199];<br>Razorbill [A200]; Sandwich Tern<br>[A863] | Functionally linked individuals may<br>forage or otherwise occur within the<br>project's ZOI. Visual and above-water<br>noise disturbance, together with<br>underwater-noise effects on diving<br>birds, could not be excluded. |
| Saltee Islands<br>SPA [004002]      | Lesser Black-backed Gull [A183];<br>Guillemot [A199]; Razorbill [A200]                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | The project area lies within the<br>published foraging ranges of these<br>SCIs. Visual and above-water noise<br>disturbance, together with<br>underwater-noise effects on Guillemot<br>and Razorbill, could not be excluded.    |

There are 62 additional site–feature combinations screened in in the AA Determination. Because several bird SCIs occur in more than one SPA, these represent 50 unique conservation features.

The mitigation currently set out in the NIS is directed principally at underwater-noise effects on marine mammals, Atlantic Salmon and Twaite Shad. Although the MMO and soft-start procedures may provide some incidental benefit to other noise-sensitive species, their effectiveness cannot be assumed for the additional habitats, otter, lamprey and SPA bird features screened in in the AA determination. The existing measures do not specifically address habitat disturbance, water-quality effects, otter disturbance, bird displacement or underwater noise affecting diving birds.

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Authority  
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This requested information should be submitted to MARA (by email to [licence@mara.gov.ie](mailto:licence@mara.gov.ie)) within 4 weeks of the date of this notice i.e. by **19/10/2026**.

Failure to submit the revised Natura Impact Statement by this date (or any extension to this date permitted by MARA for good and sufficient reason) will result in the subject MUL application being deemed to be withdrawn in accordance with Section 117(8) of the Maritime Area Planning Act 2021. Should you require an extension, please contact us at your earliest possible opportunity.

If you have any queries in relation to this matter, please do not hesitate to contact the Maritime Usage Licensing Team at [licence@mara.gov.ie](mailto:licence@mara.gov.ie).

Yours faithfully,

Leeanne Doyle  
Maritime Usage Licensing Team  
MARA

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