

SFPA Observations on Marine Usage Licence Applications

Applicant Name & Area: Wexford County Council	Application No: MUL260034
Application Category	
☐ Shellfish Aquaculture Licence ☐ Renewal of Shellfish Aquaculture Licence ☐ Fin Fish Aquaculture Licence ☐ Renewal of Fin Fish Aquaculture Licence ☐ Foreshore Licence	☐ Dumping at Sea ☐ Water discharge ☐ Harbour Developments ☐ Marine Renewables ☒ Cables/ Fiber Optics/ Site investigations

Sea Fisheries Protection Officer Observations 1. <i>Possible impacts, if any, on existing wild fisheries in the area, with an emphasis on the possible implications for the SFPA in conducting official controls and possible non-compliance issues that could arise.</i> The proposed survey areas for this application (Fig. 1) are displayed below:

Fig. 1 Location of survey sites A and B (Nicolas O'Dwyer, 2026)

An assessment of interaction between local commercial fisheries and the surveying zones were explored as part of the Supporting Information for Screening for Environmental Impact Assessment (SISEIA) for this application. Using data obtained from the Marine Institute, it was found that no significant overlap occurred (Fig. 2).

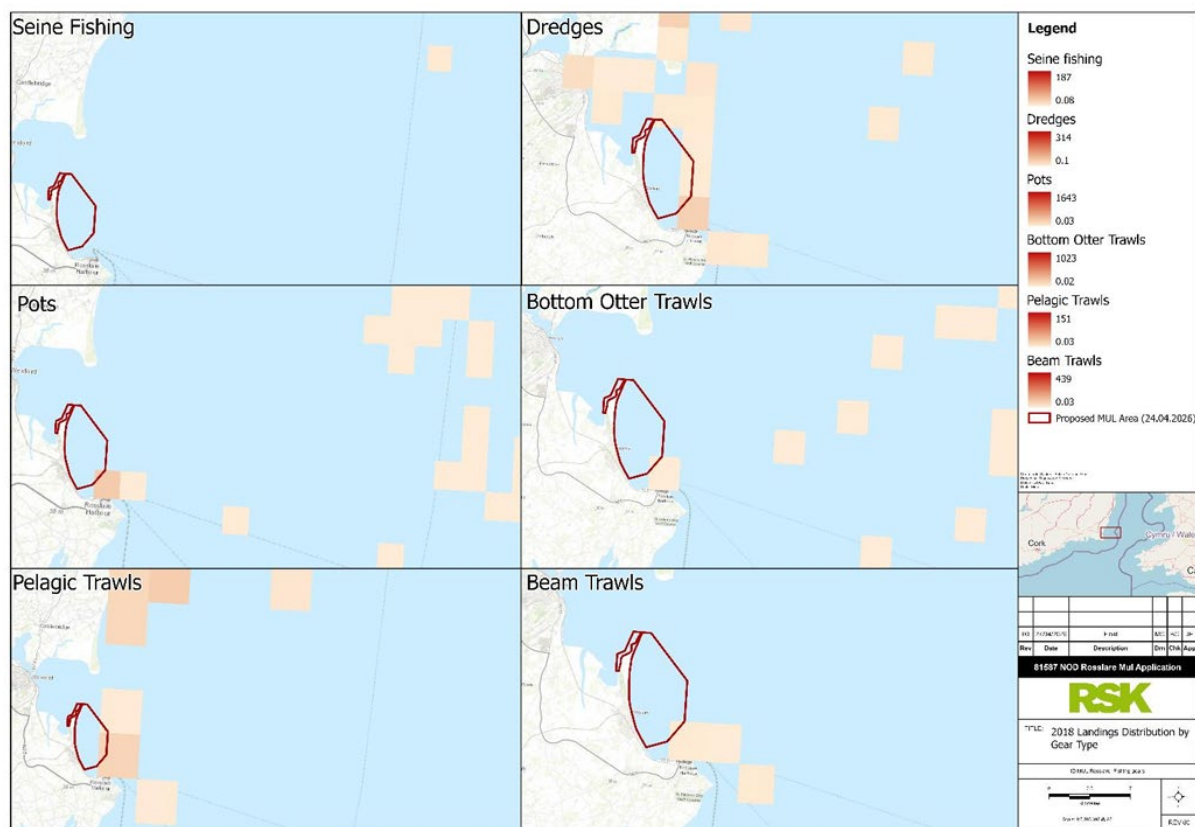


Fig. 2 Fishing activity (landings by gear type) of commercial vessels in 2018 compared with the proximity of the survey zones A & B

However, there are important wild shellfish fisheries located in and immediately adjacent to this survey area and not identified as part of the SISEIA. In particular, the southern Irish Sea razor clam (*Ensis siliqua*) dredge fishery with approximately 10 vessels participating is located within the confines of survey area B and in adjacent grounds.

The commercial razor clam beds within the locality (assessed by the Marine Institute in 2025) and can be seen below (Fig. 3):

<i>Ensis siliqua</i>	Biomass		95% HDI inf	95% HDI sup
	Mean	Median		
Biomass_Ensis siliqua	3,328.4	3,401.8	2,396.3	4,625.5
Biomass_>130mm_Ensis siliqua	2,899.4	3,174.4	2,189.5	4,430.9
Biomass_>150mm_Ensis siliqua	1,153.1	1,204.8	917.6	1,504.7

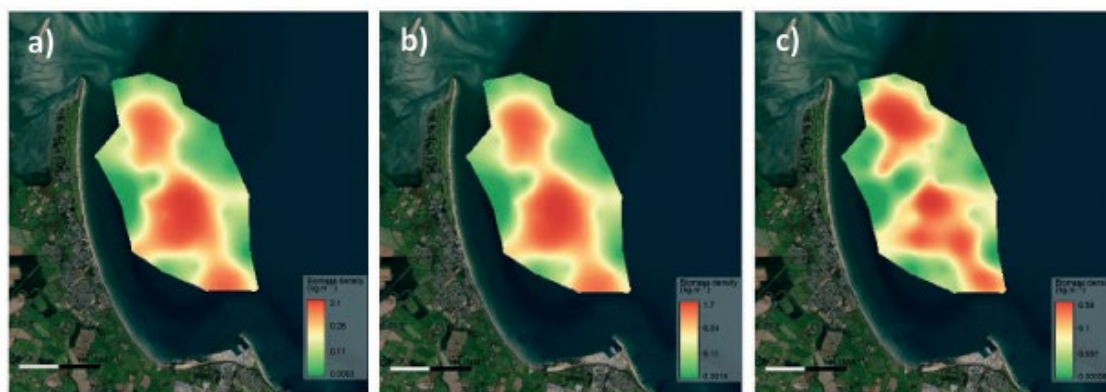


Fig. 3 Biomass and distribution/density map of commercial razor clam (*E.siliqua*) beds to the east of Rosslare Point in Co. Wexford (Marine Institute, 2026)

There is a clear overlap between the survey zone B and the beds of razor clam which are commercially fished. The extent to which surveying techniques remains to be quantified. Among the geophysical techniques which are included in this application are core sampling, cone testing and day grabs. The Supporting Information for Screening for Appropriate Assessment (SISAA) attached to the MUL application acknowledges the risk of potential smothering issues due to increased sedimentation as a result of these activities but states that the impact will be negligible.

While currents within this location are strong, thus aiding sediment dispersal, there is potential for increased risk of smothering to wild razor clam beds due to increased turbidity and resulting sedimentation within the vicinity of the geophysical works. Nonetheless, the current extraction of razor clams is achieved via hydraulic dredging methods which also increases turbidity within the locality. As *E.siliqua* is a relatively mobile bivalve, it **should** be able to overcome any potential additional sedimentation associated with the surveying works within reason.

There are no foreseen issues regarding hinderance in conducting official controls or possible non-compliances based on the application submitted.

References:

- Marine Institute, 2026. Shellfish Stocks and Fisheries Review 2025: An assessment of selected stocks. Marine Institute, Galway, Ireland

- Nicolas O'Dwyer, 2026, MUL Application 260034, Attachment 3.4 – Proposed MUL Map, URL: [MUL260034-Attachment-3.4-Proposed-MUL-Map.pdf](#) (Accessed 06/06/2026)

- Possible impacts, if any, on adjacent or nearby shellfish production areas adjacent, including possible implications for the SFPA in conducting official controls and possible non-compliance issues that could arise.

Survey area A is located to the west of Rosslare Point (Fig. 1). This means that Area A is located within the confines of Wexford Harbour and therefore within very close proximity to previously designated shellfish aquaculture areas as can be seen below in Fig. 3.

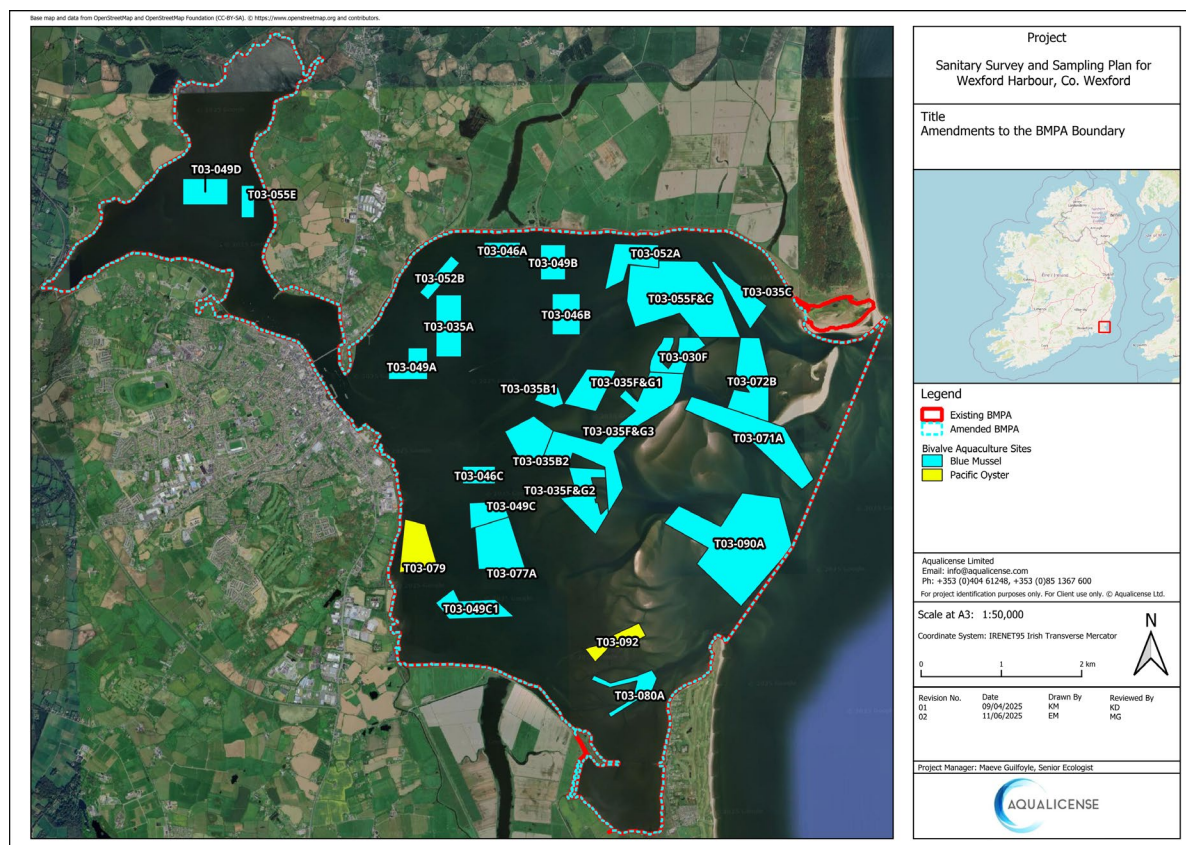


Fig. 3 Locations of designated blue mussel (*Mytilus edulis*) and pacific oyster (*Magallana gigas*) aquaculture sites within Wexford Harbour (Aqualicence, 2025)

Assessment of sedimentation due to increased turbidity because of surveying techniques such as boreholes, vibro cone testing and day grabs found that some elevated levels are to be expected. As per the associated SISAA, this level was deemed to be negligible due to the currents along the Rosslare coast (to the east of Rosslare Point) aiding suspended particle dispersal and dilation. However, surveying

in area A poses a different challenge due to the complex currents located in the area. A study by Hartnett & Nash (2004) found that currents on the south side of Wexford Harbour, particularly in proximity to Rosslare Point, were low with intermixing of waters from this area with others being slow. The presence of aquaculture sites for blue mussel and pacific oyster within that area therefore may suffer potential negative impacts from increased sedimentation levels. The SISEIA does mention that survey works are expected to have a negligible impact on shellfish aquaculture at these locations but does not address the issue of low water flow rates at survey site A, which could potentially result in increased morbidity of shellfish farmed there.

There may be potential issues regarding hinderance in conducting official controls or possible non-compliances based on the application submitted – if access to the survey zone A is restricted during surveying windows, it may not be possible to obtain shellfish samples for biotoxin analysis from there during that time. This may have further implications for bay classification status and may negatively impact on the commercial value of product within the bay.

References:

- Aqualicense, 2025, Sanitary Survey and Sampling Plan For Wexford Harbour, Co. Wexford – June 2025
- Hartnett, M. & Nash, S., 2004, Modelling nutrient and chlorophyll_a dynamics in an Irish brackish waterbody, *Environmental Modelling and Software*, Vol.19(1), pp.47-56

3. *Possible impacts, if any, on seafood safety, with an emphasis on the implications for the SFPA in conducting official controls and possible non-compliance issues that could arise.*

The surveying techniques, including geophysical processes, outlined in the application pose a negligible risk to seafood safety within the locality if adhered to.

Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority

Dunmore East

Date:

09/06/2026