



Iascach Intíre Éireann
Inland Fisheries Ireland

Stage 1 - Appropriate Assessment Screening

Conclusion Statement

Introduction:

Inland Fisheries Ireland (IFI) are the Irish state body responsible for the protection, management and conservation of the inland fisheries and sea angling resources. In accordance with the EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES (BIRDS AND NATURAL HABITATS) REGULATIONS 2011, as amended, IFI are required to determine if plans or projects that they propose, or wish to adopt, could act either alone or in-combination with other plans or projects to cause a significant effect on a European site.

This determination is carried out following a review of the Appropriate Assessment Screening document submitted to IFI for review, and is the result of the Inland Fisheries Ireland comprehensive and objective Appropriate Assessment determination process.

This process is aligned with the IFI vision to position Ireland's inland fisheries and sea angling resources as sustainably as possible for the benefit of future generations. This document informs stakeholders of this commitment and its rationale by outlining the decision-making process and IFI's final determination on the specific plan or project below, with a clear and transparent justification.

Synopsis:

This review is carried out by an independent external environmental expert agency that provides professional advice if an Appropriate Assessment (NIS) is required for the plan or project, or not. A further review of this process is then carried out by a relevant Inland Fisheries Ireland Head of Function who will either validate the conclusion of the determination, or not, as appropriate.

As part of the EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES (BIRDS AND NATURAL HABITATS) REGULATIONS 2011, as amended, and in accordance with Regulation (18) (a) Inland Fisheries Ireland as a public authority shall make available for inspection any determination that it makes in relation to a plan or project and provide reasons for that determination, as soon as may be after the making of the determination or giving the notice, as appropriate, by members of the public during office hours of the offices of the authority and shall also make the determination or notice available in electronic form including by placing the documents on the authority's website.

This determination will be available on the IFI website at <https://www.fisheriesireland.ie/what-we-do/conservation-and-development/determinations>.

Project Reference	DET-2026-000315
Project Name	Oyster Dredging Lough Swilly
Project Description	As part of their responsibility to manage the Inland Fisheries resource IFI are required to issue licenses to certain native oyster fishers that permit them to carry out dredging for native oysters in certain areas around the country. One of the areas where oyster dredging occurs on Lough Swilly. Inland Fisheries Ireland issues licenses to certain native oyster fishers at a number of locations around the country to dredge for native Irish Oysters. Dredging is carried out using a 4 foot dredge which is fished from the back or the side of a boat. Dredging for native oysters can occur in the months September to April inclusive
Accompanying Report	Oyster_Dredging_on_Lough_Swilly_Appropriate_Assessment__Screening_2026.pdf,
Consultations	
Agency	Observations
European Sites	
Site Name (1)	IE0004075 - Lough Swilly SPA
Proximity / Connection to Site	The works are on Lough Swilly and directly in this SPA
Qualifying Interest	Great Crested Grebe (<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>) [A005] Grey Heron (<i>Ardea cinerea</i>) [A028] Whooper Swan (<i>Cygnus cygnus</i>) [A038] Greylag Goose (<i>Anser anser</i>) [A043] Shelduck (<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>) [A048] Teal (<i>Anas crecca</i>) [A052] Mallard (<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>) [A053] Scaup (<i>Aythya marila</i>) [A062] Goldeneye (<i>Bucephala clangula</i>) [A067] Red-breasted Merganser (<i>Mergus serrator</i>) [A069] Coot (<i>Fulica atra</i>) [A125] Oystercatcher (<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>) [A130] Knot (<i>Calidris canutus</i>) [A143] Dunlin (<i>Calidris alpina</i>) [A149] Curlew (<i>Numenius arquata</i>) [A160] Redshank (<i>Tringa totanus</i>) [A162] Greenshank (<i>Tringa nebularia</i>) [A164] Black-headed Gull (<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>) [A179] Common Gull (<i>Larus canus</i>) [A182] Common Tern (<i>Sterna hirundo</i>) [A193] Greenland White-fronted Goose (<i>Anser albifrons flavirostris</i>) [A395] Wigeon (<i>Mareca penelope</i>) [A855] Shoveler (<i>Spatula clypeata</i>) [A857] Sandwich Tern (<i>Thalasseus sandvicensis</i>) [A863] Wetland and Waterbirds [A999]

Connections	In the zone of influence, however, the activity of oyster dredging is unlikely to pose a risk to or impact on seabirds and waterbirds within Lough Swilly SPA. No fishing nets are left in-situ and there is no risk of direct injury or entanglement of seabirds. The activity takes place on open water and does not impact of bird nest sites.
Effect	<i>Potential Effects:</i> Yes <i>Significant:</i> No <i>Reason:</i>

Assessment & Determination

Assessment of likely significance of effects

Reduction of Habitat: The activity of oyster dredging poses a risk of the reduction of the annexed habitat – Estuaries, habitat no. 1130. Potential Change to annexed habitat within a Natura 2000 site.

Disturbance to Key Species: The activity of oyster dredging poses a risk to the *Ostrea edulis* dominated community (flat oyster) and other intertidal species within Lough Swilly.

Disturbance of Key Species within a Natura 2000 site.

Habitat or Species Fragmentation: The activity of oyster dredging poses a risk to the *Ostrea edulis* dominated community (flat oyster) and other intertidal species within Lough Swilly.

Potential for Habitat or Species Fragmentation within a Natura 2000 site.

Reduction in Species Density: The purpose of oyster dredging is to capture and remove *Ostrea edulis* (flat oyster) for the food industry. Other intertidal species within Lough Swilly may also be impacted on through bycatch and a loss in and disturbance of habitat.

Potential for a Reduction in Species Density within a Natura 2000 site.

Changes in key indicators of conservation value: The purpose of oyster dredging is to capture and remove *Ostrea edulis* (flat oyster) for the food industry. Other intertidal species within Lough Swilly may also be impacted on through bycatch and a loss in and disturbance of habitat. Potential Changes in key indicators of conservation value within a Natura 2000 site.

Determination

A Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment (Natura Impact Statement) is required for Oyster Dredging on Lough Swilly to further evaluate potential mitigation measures and the ecological impact of oyster dredging on Lough Swilly.

Conclusion: NIS Required, effect on European site or protected species likely or uncertain without implementing mitigation measures necessary for the protection of Natura 2000 sites.

We, the undersigned, having carefully considered the information referred to above, agree with and adopt the reasoning and conclusions presented

Validated by: Barry Fox

Date: 14-10-2026

Inland Fisheries Ireland, Head of Function



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Inland Fisheries Ireland

