

11.1 Explanation as to why the derogation sought is the only available option for works and no suitable alternative exists as per Regulation 54 of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations.

Natterjack toads are endangered in Ireland and the numbers breeding in the wild is not sufficient to maintain the population. DingleOceanworld are working with NPWS to provide captive rearing facilities and expertise to boost the wild breeding.

11.2 Evidence that actions permitted by a derogation will not be detrimental to the maintenance of the populations of the species to which the Habitats Directive relates at a favourable conservation status in their natural range as is required under Section 54(2) of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations.

The captive rearing programme being run by DingleOceanworld is enhancing the breeding success of natterjack toads annually. All metamorphs are returned to the wild within the toad's natural range. NPWS officers are involved and contacted regularly to organise these toads being placed back to where they come from.

11.3 Details of any mitigation measures planned for the species affected by the derogation at the location, along with evidence that such mitigation has been successful elsewhere.

DingleOceanworld have developed a very successful captive rearing system with high success rate. Strong biosecurity measures are in place. Over 6,000 tadpoles/eggs have been successfully reared to date and resulting metamorphs have been successfully return to the wild.

11.4 As much information as possible to allow a decision to be made on this application.

These captive rearing operations are run jointly by NPWS and DingleOceanworld and complement the similar programme in place in Fota. Dingle Oceanworld Aquarium has been involved in Natterjack Toad conservation for a number of years now through breeding and reintroduction efforts. As of recent we have released over 6,000 Natterjack Toad tadpoles and juvenile toads into their natural habitats as part of their ongoing conservation program. This initiative aims to restore the local population of Natterjack Toads in areas where they have been declining due to habitat loss and other environmental pressures.

These releases are part of a broader conservation effort to protect the species and ensure its survival in the wild, and the aquarium works in collaboration with other conservation groups and governmental agencies to monitor and support the toads' reintroduction into the wild as well as other conservation efforts also. The aquarium is involved in educating the public about the conservation of sharks and rays, both of which face threats from overfishing, habitat loss, and the illegal wildlife trade.

The aquarium showcases various species of sharks and rays, highlighting their role in maintaining healthy marine ecosystems and the need for global conservation efforts. We also have a sea turtle rehabilitation unit and release here as part of our conservation strategy whereby we get sick/injured/ washed up sea turtles and bring them back to full health to be re-released.

