Addition of Harbour Porpoise and Bottlenose Dolphin as new Qualifying Interests and the addition of an Activity Requiring Consent to Hook Head Special Area of Conservation 000764 in County Wexford

Ireland designates Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) in its inshore and offshore waters to protect marine habitats and species listed on Annex I and Annex II of the 1992 EU Habitats Directive.

The Minister has added Harbour Porpoise and Bottlenose Dolphin as Qualifying Interests to Hook Head SAC 000764 in County Wexford.

The full list of Qualifying Interests, including the newly added Harbour Porpoise and Bottlenose Dolphin, for Hook Head SAC is as follows:

Natural Habitat Type

In this list the sign [*] indicates a priority habitat type as defined in the Directive.

Natura 2000 Code	Description
1160	Large shallow inlets and bays
1170	Reefs
1230	Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts

Animal and Plant Species

Natura 2000 Code	Common Name	Scientific Name
1349	Bottlenose Dolphin	Tursiops truncatus
1351	Harbour Porpoise	Phocoena phocoena

The addition of Harbour Porpoise and Bottlenose Dolphin as Qualifying Interests has resulted in an additional activity (ARC 35) being added to the list of Activities Requiring Consent (ARCs) that apply to this site. The Minister has reason to believe that this activity may cause disturbance of and may impact on the conservation status of these species. Therefore, the Minister has issued a new Direction adding ARC 35 to the list of ARCs that apply to this site and has directed that these activities cannot be carried out, caused or permitted to be carried out or continued to be carried out in the SAC, unless it is with the consent of the Minister.

It is an offence to contravene any Direction by carrying out any of the activities within the site unless the activity is carried out with the consent of the Minister or another statutory authority (in practice, such consent should be sought initially from the Department's National Parks and Wildlife Service https://www.npws.ie/contact-us).

The full list of Activities Requiring Consent, including the newly added ARC 35, that apply to this site are:

- ARC 01 Reclamation, including infilling.
- ARC 03 Blasting, drilling, dredging or otherwise removing or disturbing fossils, rock, minerals, mud, sand, gravel or other sediment.
- ARC 05 Cutting, uprooting or otherwise removing plants. [Consent is not required for harvesting of cultivated crops, or for grazing or mowing.]
- ARC 06 Introduction, or re-introduction, of plants or animals not found in the area. [Consent is not required for the planting of crops on established reseeded grassland or cultivated land.]
- ARC 08 Undertaking scientific research involving the collection and removal of biological material.
- ARC 09 Construction or alteration of tracks, paths, roads, bridges, culverts or access routes.
- ARC 10 Construction, removal or alteration of fences, stone walls, hedgerows, banks or any field boundary other than temporary electric fencing. [Consent is not required for normal maintenance.]
- ARC 11 Digging, ploughing, harrowing or otherwise disturbing soil or substrate. [Consent is not required for these activities on established reseeded grassland or cultivated land provided it is greater than 50m from a river, stream, floodplain, wetland, lake, turlough or pond.]
- ARC 14 Storage, burial, disposal or recovery of any materials. [Consent is not required for these activities on established reseeded grassland or cultivated land provided it is greater than 20m from a river, stream or floodplain; or greater than 50m from a wetland, lake, turlough or pond.]
- ARC 15 Burning, topping, clearing scrub or rough vegetation or reseeding. [Consent is not required for these activities on established reseeded grassland or cultivated land provided it is greater than 20m from a river, stream or floodplain; or greater than 50m from a wetland, lake, turlough or pond.]
- ARC 18 Application of pesticides, including herbicides. [Consent is not required for these activities on established reseeded grassland or cultivated land provided it is greater than 20m from a river, stream or floodplain; or greater than 50m from a wetland, lake, turlough or pond.]
- ARC 24 Works on, or alterations to, the banks, bed or flow of a drain, watercourse or waterbody.
- ARC 25 Drainage works including digging, deepening, widening or blocking a drain, watercourse or waterbody.
- ARC 31 Developing or consenting to the development or operation of commercial recreational/visitor facilities or organised recreational activities.
- ARC 35 Undertaking active acoustic surveys in the marine environment
- ARC 36 Harvesting marine invertebrate species in intertidal areas.

ARC 37 Driving mechanically propelled vehicles in intertidal areas, except over prescribed access routes.

22nd March 2024

