

NatureScot's role in the seaweed industry

Scottish Seaweed Industry Association Conference
2023

Chris Nall

Marine Sustainable Advisor – Sustainable Coasts and Seas

14/11/23



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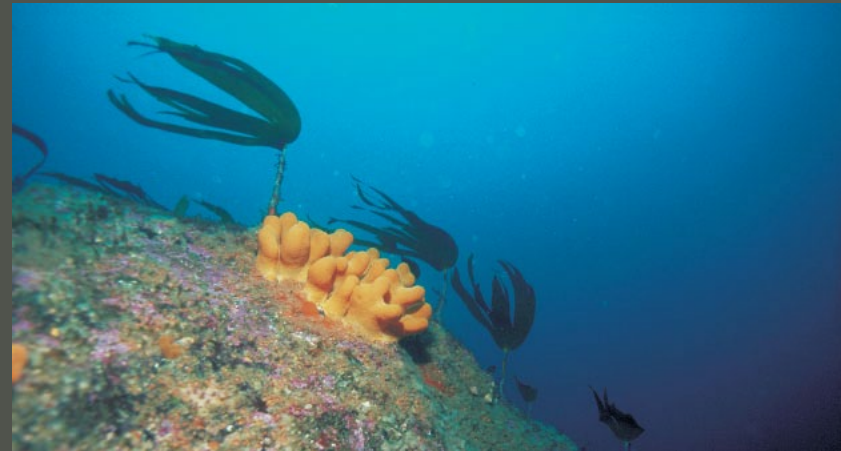
NatureScot and the seaweed industry

- NatureScot and our role
- Routes to consultation
- Natural heritage considerations we make when advising on applications
- Available guidance



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NatureScot's role:

- Scotland's natural heritage public body
- Regulatory role in the Seaweed industry
- We advise consenting bodies on natural heritage aspects of marine proposals within Scotland's territorial waters (0-12nm)
- In some cases we can be the consenting body – specifically when a proposal lies within a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and seaweed removal is an operation requiring consent



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Our conservation advice is in the context of environmental legislation relevant to Scotland and its territorial waters (0-12nm)



Restriction on Removal of Wild Kelp from Seabed

Source: Wild Seaweed Harvesting SEA (2016)



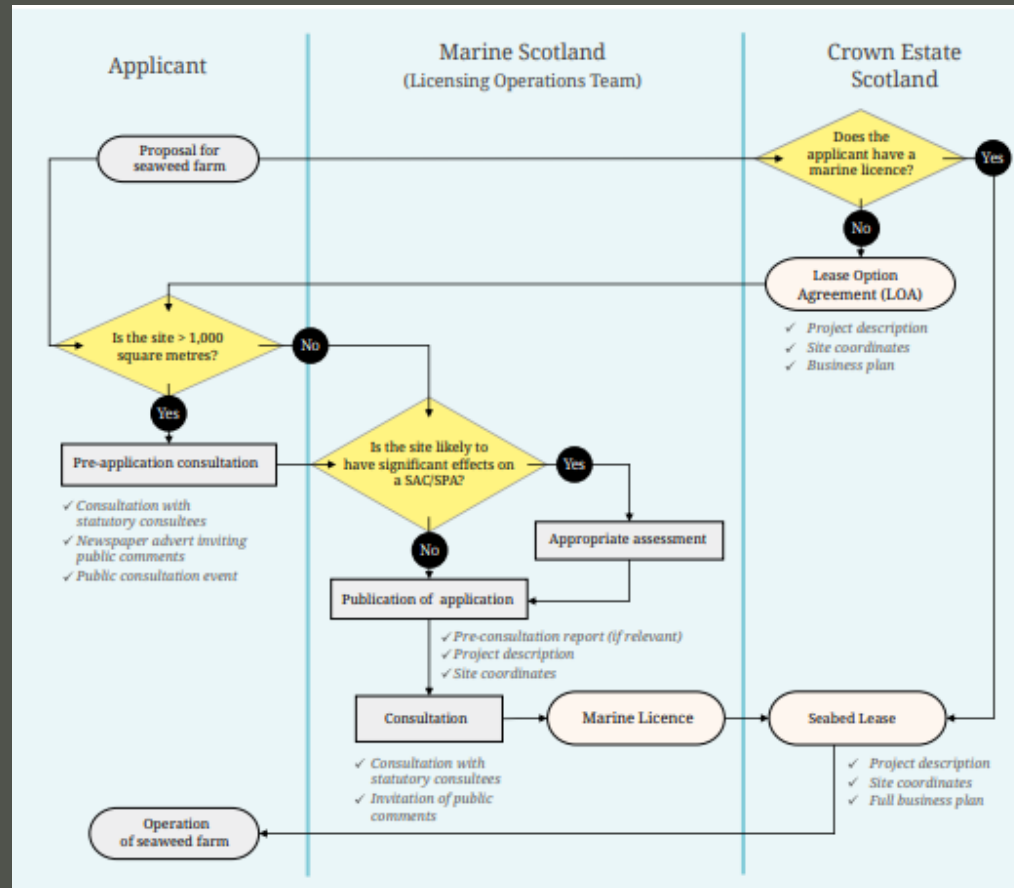
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Seaweed cultivation - route for consultation

Marine licence required for a seaweed farm

- we are a statutory consultee to the Marine Directorate during the marine licence application process



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SIFT : Seaweed
cultivation guide

Seaweed cultivation - route for consultation

- **Crown Estate Scotland (CES) harvesting licence** - foreshore and seabed
 - we provide CES advice on natural heritage and sustainability of harvest operations ([CES Wild seaweed licencing webpage](#))
- **Permission on private foreshore**
 - we can consult with landowner or harvesting company directly
 - obligation on harvester to contact us if site within SSSI
- **Marine licence** where required for mechanical harvesting
 - we are a consultee to the Marine Directorate

We can also offer advice directly to developers during any stage of a proposal (pre-app, operation)



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What we are looking at when we are consulted on a proposal?

- Location and scale of the operation
- Activities involved (species, methods, time of year and duration, fallow periods)



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Marine protected areas and protected species and habitats

Internationally important:

Special Areas of Conservation (SACs)

Special Protection Areas for birds (SPAs)

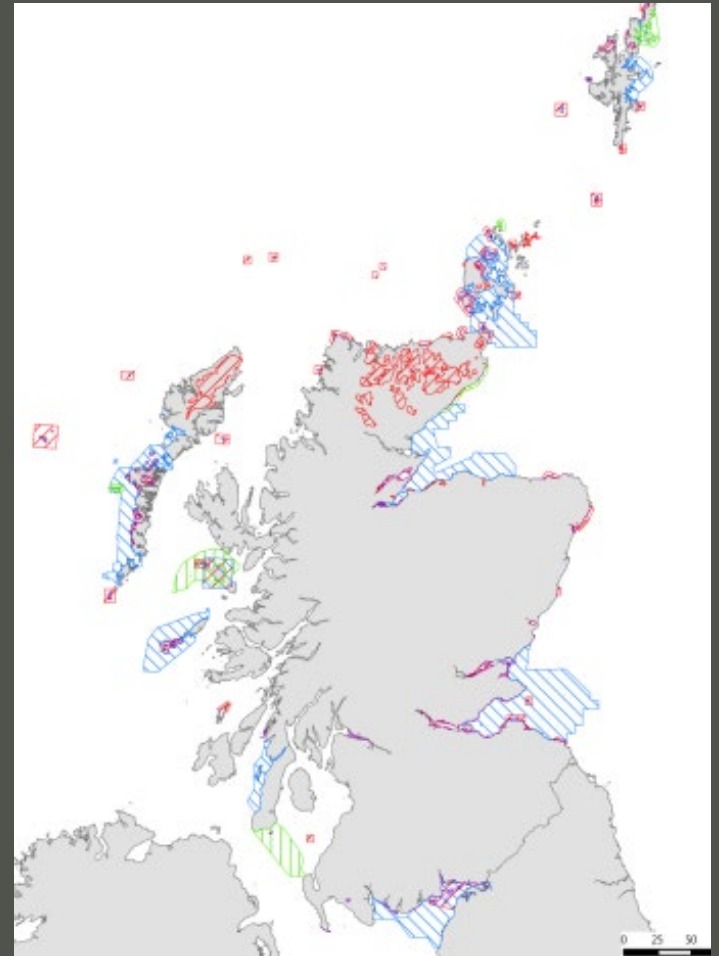
Nationally important:

SSSIs

Marine Protected Areas (NC MPAs)

Priority Marine Features (PMFs)

Seal haul out sites



Protected sites supporting birds that use coastal waters (SEA Report 2016)



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Seaweed harvesting

All Harvesting

- Additional considerations if harvest site is within areas of protected for seaweed features (some SACs, NC MPAs, SSSIs)
- We will advise on best practice

Moderate and large scale harvesting

- A stock biomass assessment
- A sustainable harvesting strategy
- Impact monitoring strategy



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Seaweed harvesting – beach-cast

*seaweed that is detached and no longer growing

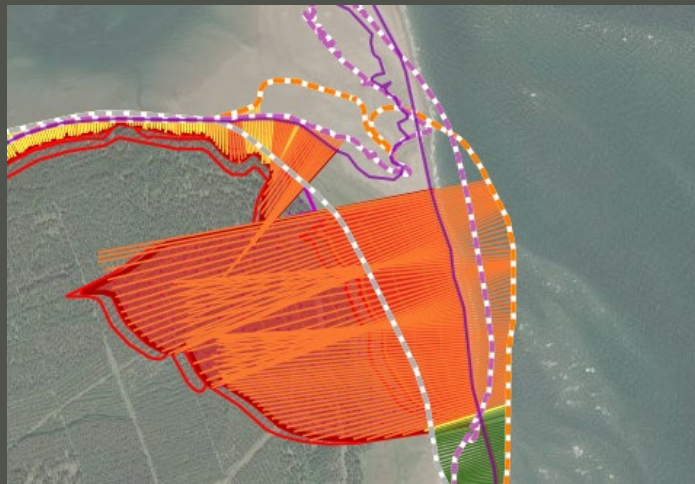
Some specific considerations

- Sites that have wintering or breeding birds that use cast for feeding
- Sites prone to coastal erosion and protected dune habitats where beach-cast facilitates sediment retention (<https://www.dynamiccoast.com/webmaps>)



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Cultivation – specific considerations

- Limit entanglement risk on marine mammals and birds
- Vessel management (avoid disturbing wildlife and collisions)
best practice: [Scottish Marine Wildlife Watching Code and Guide to Best Practice for Watching Marine Wildlife](#)
- Collection of reproductive material
best practice guidance on sustainability (e.g. genetic integrity)
- Benthic habitats
advise against situating farm over habitats sensitive to light reduction (maerl and seagrass beds)
- Farm design and visual impacts (might need consideration particularly if in National Scenic Area)
[NatureScot Guidance on siting and design of aquaculture](#)



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Cultivation - Biosecurity requirements

- Preventative measures taken to limit the introduction or spread of any **invasive non-native species**
- Generic guidance on best practice biosecurity planning: [NatureScot commissioned report 748](#)
- NatureScot Seaweed cultivation marine biosecurity plan Template and guidance note **coming out soon**



[C. Beveridge - D.vex Clyde report](#)



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Please engage as early as possible

20 working days response time

chris.nall@nature.scot

marineactivities@nature.scot



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Thanks for listening

chris.nall@nature.scot

marineactivities@nature.scot



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