



Fishing vessels in Tarbert
West coast of Scotland

As a key user group of the UK marine environment, the views of the fishing industry on JNCC's proposals for offshore SACs were particularly sought. Several meetings were held during 2007–2008 and their information was taken on board and responded to in the advice given to Government.



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> Marine management advice

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JNCC advises the Government on issues that impact on nature conservation in the marine environment, including fisheries, mineral extraction, and renewable energy

Issues surrounding nature conservation in the marine environment are taking an increasingly high profile position on JNCC's agenda, and have involved significant effort during the reporting year. JNCC has contributed to the preparation of the Marine Bill, which was published in draft in April 2008, and has a bearing on a number of areas that touch on JNCC responsibilities. Our involvement has included the production of an impact assessment and early work to identify possible Marine Conservation Zones. JNCC was also involved in work on UK implementation of the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive.

One of the major pressures on the offshore marine environment is fishing, and during the year JNCC continued to work to integrate

environmental and fisheries advice through engagement with international bodies. Central to this effort is our involvement with the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES). During the year JNCC's Mark Tasker chaired the ICES Advisory Committee on Ecosystems, and his colleague Tom Blasdale chaired a working group on deep-water fish stocks. Mark Tasker also chaired a European Commission review of closed areas for fishing in the Atlantic region.

Throughout the year JNCC staff provided advice concerning offshore industries, an area of work that is partly funded by external bodies. We were involved in the Strategic Environmental Assessment for a third round of renewable energy development, with the aim



Black-legged kittiwake

Rissa tridactyla

The impact of the changing climate on the seas around the UK was highlighted in January 2008, when the Marine Climate Change Impacts Partnership (MCCIP) launched its annual report.

Ministers from the UK and Scottish Government attended the launch. MCCIP is led by the Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science and is supported by JNCC. The report notes that 2006 was the second-warmest in UK coastal water since records began, that warmer weather will bring more severe storms and increased coastal erosion, and that warmer winters are strongly linked to reduced breeding success in some seabirds, such as the black-legged kittiwake.



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of ensuring that potential locations for windfarms and other offshore renewable energy projects do not conflict with nature conservation interests. JNCC commented on specific licences for offshore windfarms, and during the year these amounted to licences that will account for some 600 megawatts of generation, a record to date.

We have also played a role in identifying research priorities for the Collaborative Offshore Windfarm Research Into the Environment (COWRIE), an independent body which supports study of the potential environmental impacts of the UK offshore windfarm programme.

JNCC was also involved in 30 Environmental Impact Statements for oil and gas developments, 294 Petroleum Operations Notices, so-called 'mini-environmental impact assessments', and 154 other consents related to oil and gas activities.

Aggregates extraction is another important area of our work. JNCC plays a role in the industry-led Regional Environmental Assessment process, which has carried out an assessment of activity in the eastern Channel. During the reporting year further assessments were begun on the Thames and Isle of Wight regions, both with the involvement of JNCC. Guidance for how assessments should be carried out has been drawn up by a group that brings together JNCC with the Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science, Natural England and English Heritage. This group also distributes funding from the Marine Aggregate Levy Fund to support research into the industry's impact on the environment.

During the year, regulations to implement the protected area provisions of the Habitats and Birds Directives in offshore waters came into force. Consultation undertaken on the first tranche of seven offshore Special Areas of Conservation under the Habitats Directive is reported in section 8. Before and during the consultation, JNCC met with a wide range of UK and European marine stakeholders, including fishermen's organisations, to present the proposals.



