

International and Offshore Energy Division,

14th June 2024

South Coast DMAP Submission,

Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications,

29-31 Adelaide Road, Dublin 2, D02 X285

Re: **Public Consultation on the South Coast Designated Maritime Area Plan for Offshore Renewable Energy (SC-DMAP)**
Submission of Wild Ireland Defence clg

On behalf of Wild Ireland Defence clg I wish to make the following Submission.

The publicly available documentation on the Department's Website includes a document entitled:

"Appropriate Assessment Screening Determination under the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (as amended) for the South Coast Designated Maritime Area Plan."

This document informs us that *"it concluded that a Natura Impact Statement (NIS) should be prepared for the draft SC-DMAP."*

In the final 2 paragraphs of this document, we are informed that:

"It is hereby determined, pursuant to Regulation 42 of S.I. No. 477/2011, as amended, and for the purposes of Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive, that an AA be carried out and an NIS be prepared to ascertain whether or not the draft Plan would adversely affect the integrity of a European site. This determination aligns with the requirement in section 22(3) of the Maritime Area Planning Act 2021, as amended, for the competent authority (D), being the Minister for Environment Climate and Communications, to cause an AA to be carried out in relation to the draft SC-DMAP."

This document is signed off on by Mr Conor McCabe Conor McCabe, Principal Officer at the International and Offshore Energy Division of the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications and is dated the 2nd of May 2024.

As happens, Marine Notice No 24 of 2024 published on 11 June 2024 advises that the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications (DECC) will be undertaking **hydrographic and geophysical surveys in the South Coast Designated Maritime Area Plan (DMAP)** between **6 July** and **20 September 2024** for a total of approximately 52 days. Are we to presume that the environmental information required or hoped to be discovered as a result of this Survey will be included in the documentation grounding the Consent procedure underpinning the conducting of and independent Appropriate Assessment in accordance with both Birds and Habitats Directives?

Will the Impacts, both Adverse and otherwise of these **hydrographic and geophysical surveys** over a period of 52 days be included in the Information required to be assembled for purposes of conducting Appropriate Assessment? How were the impacts, if any, flowing from this Survey actually assessed prior to notification that the Surveys will proceed? Will the Minister actually intervene prior to the beginning of these **hydrographic and geophysical surveys** and actually assess whether or not Consent should be granted for the Surveys to proceed following appropriate assessment, either in accordance with the EU EIA Directive or in accordance with the Habitats & Birds Directives?

We respectfully request that the Minister note that these Waters are proposed to become a designated Marine Mammal Protected Area and we respectfully request that Minister Ryan take notice that all of these waters are subject to designation. Information is available at this link: <https://www.marinemammalhabitat.org/factsheets/celtic-sea-imma/> and **Qualifying Species and Criteria** include:

Fin whale – *Balaenoptera physalus*

Criterion A, C (2)

Minke whale – *Balaenoptera acutorostrata*

Criterion C (2)

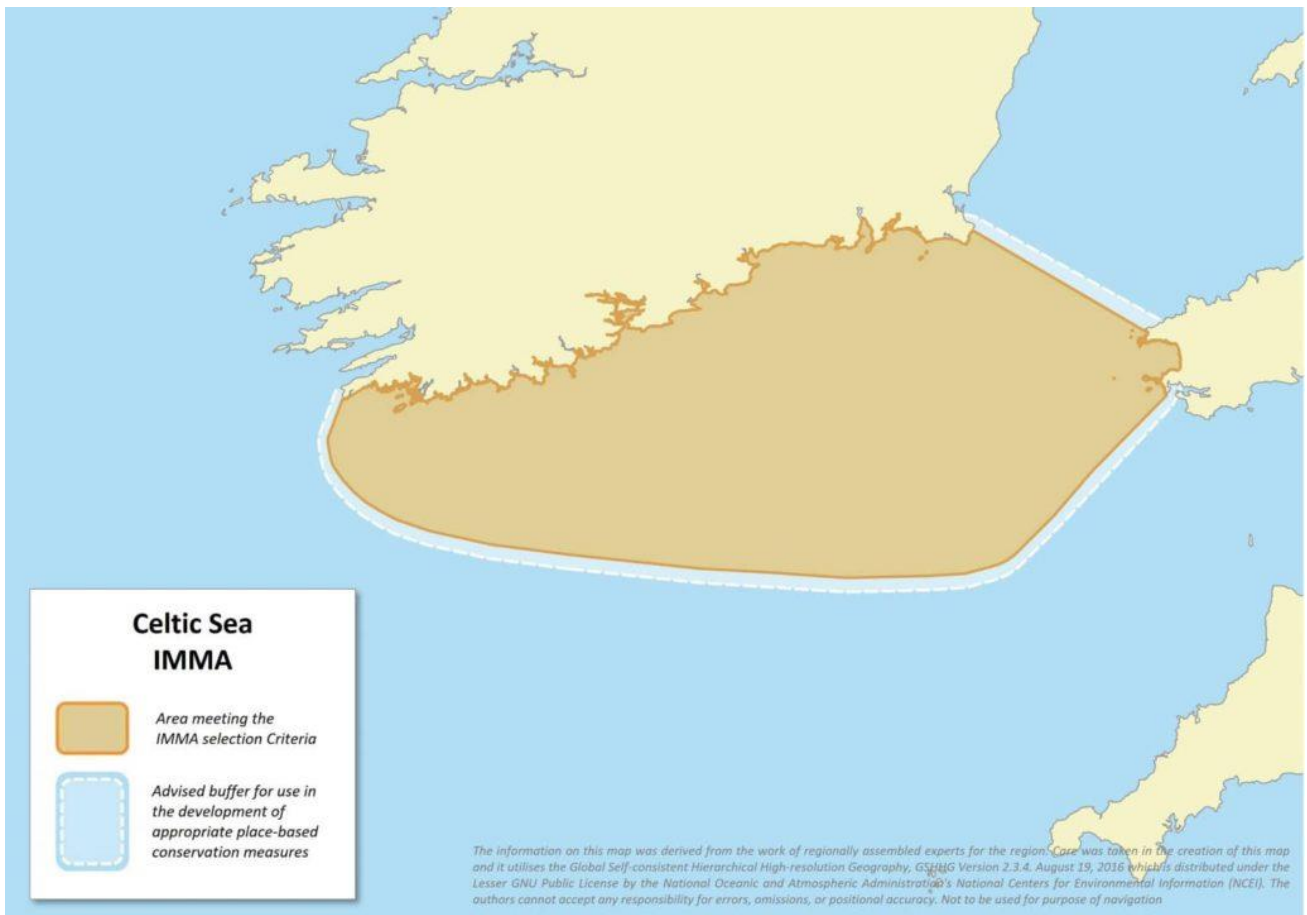
Humpback whale – *Megaptera novaeangliae*

Criterion C (2)

Marine Mammal Diversity

Criterion D (2)

Balaenoptera physalus, Balaenoptera acutorostrata, Megaptera novaeangliae, Delphinus delphis, Phocoena phocoena, Grampus griseus, Globicephala melas, Halichoerus grypus, Phoca vitulina, Tursiops truncatus



With all due respects to all concerned, we are at a loss as to how the Minister for the Environment, Climate and Communications has proceeded with this Consultation process that is designed to permit the formal designation of the **South Coast Designated Maritime Area Plan for Offshore Renewable Energy (SC-DMAP)** absent the collection and presentation of all of the Environmental Information required pursuant to both the Habitats and Birds Directives of the EU so as to enable an Appropriate Assessment to be independently conducted on the issue of whether Ministerial designation of the **South Coast Designated Maritime Area Plan for Offshore Renewable Energy (SC-DMAP)** can proceed

NO attempt should be made by Minister Ryan to designate any of these waters for the purpose of construction of Offshore Wind Turbines and the creation of a web of Cabling on the sea-floor between Turbines and then connection all Turbines to the land absent the conclusion of a prior Appropriate Assessment that is independently assessed.

Moreover **NO** attempt should be made by Minister Ryan to proceed with designation of any of these Waters absent an independently-conducted **Appropriate Assessment** that is conducted in accordance with Article 6 (3) & (4) of the Habitats Directive.

We respectfully request that you note our position

Yours sincerely

[Redacted signature]

[Redacted name]

[Redacted title]

[Redacted address]

And on behalf of:

Wild Ireland Defence

Newtown

Bantry

County Cork