



Written Submission
for the
Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
Response to the Examining Authority's
Rule 17 letter dated 15 April 2025

25 April 2025

Planning Act 2008 (as amended)

In the matter of:

**Application by Dogger Bank South (West) Limited and Dogger Bank South
(East) Limited for an Order**

**Granting Development Consent for the Dogger Bank South Offshore Wind
Farms**

Planning Inspectorate Ref: EN010125

RSPB Registration Identification Ref: 20050122

Contents

1. Introduction	3
-----------------------	---

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The RSPB's response to the Examining Authority's Rule 17 letter (dated 15 April 2025) and associated actions arising from ISH5 for the RSPB, are set out in the table below.

Responses to the Examining Authority's Rule 17 letter- Actions arising from ISH5 (dated 15 April 2025)

ISH5 Action	Question to:	Question	RSPB response
5	RSPB	Respond to Dr Trinder's (the applicants) comments during ISH5 on the applicants' quality assurance of the digital aerial survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The RSPB note that while the digital aerial survey data undergoes internal QA by the survey provider, there is no independent external quality assurance. Dr. Trinder accepted this but pointed out that this had been carried out previously and that it "essentially failed to find any significant biases". The RSPB was not aware of this independent assessment and would be grateful if more detail could be provided to the Examination of this QA process and the results. - The RSPB also note although NE guidance (Parker et al. 2022¹) does not include an explicit requirement for external quality assurance, it does say: "Increasing clarity on the validation of data and results would increase overall confidence in the dataset and provide assurance in the interpretation, which could reduce the need for precaution during examination." While that does not specifically suggest a need for external QA it does raise the need for increased clarity on QA and data validation – an obvious way of doing this would be to introduce independent external QA. - The RSPB position on DAS has been informed by a NatureScot review

¹ Parker, J., Banks, A., Fawcett, A., Axelsson, M., Rowell, H., Allen, S., Ludgate, C., Humphrey, O., Baker, A. & Copley, V. (2022). Offshore Wind Marine Environmental Assessments: Best Practice Advice for Evidence and Data Standards. Phase I: Expectations for pre-application baseline data for designated nature conservation and landscape receptors to support offshore wind applications. Natural England. Version 1.1. 79 pp.

ISH5 Action	Question to:	Question	RSPB response
			<p>(https://www.nature.scot/doc/offshore-wind-ornithological-impact-assessment-review-digital-aerial-survey-methods) produced by a sub-group of NatureScot's Scientific Advisory Committee, which RSPB was a member of. The review was published in January 2023. As such, it was published after the majority of the Applicant's Digital Aerial Surveys had been completed and the Expert Topic Group meetings where the method was discussed. Hence why our comments were made subsequent to any ETG agreement.</p>
14	NE RSPB	Respond to the applicants' comments during ISH5 on their reasoning for the reduction from three to two breeding seasons to achieve compensation for kittiwakes in advance of first operation of the proposed development.	<p>The RSPB has reviewed the Applicant's comments during ISH5 on their reasoning for the reduction from three to two breeding seasons to achieve compensation for kittiwakes in advance of first operation of the proposed development (ISH5, Transcript 1, pages 31-32).</p> <p>The RSPB has noted that the Applicant has committed to provide a written summary of its oral submission at Deadline 4, with particular reference to its logistical reasons for requiring a reduction in the number of breeding seasons. The RSPB will review the Applicant's written submission and, if necessary, aim to respond at Deadline 5.</p> <p>In respect of its submission on matters relating to mortality debt, the RSPB's view remains the same as set out in its response to question OR.1.26 in our response to ExQ1 (see REP3-066).</p>

ISH5 Action	Question to:	Question	RSPB response
19	NE RSPB	Respond to the applicants' comments during ISH5 on auk compensation.	<p>The RSPB has reviewed the Applicant's comments during ISH5 on auk compensation (ISH5, Transcript 2, pages 4-10).</p> <p>In particular, these relate to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Updates on the project's surveys of Worms Head and Middle Mouse; - Publication of redacted information on the Applicant's assessments of the capacity of suitable nesting habitat for Worms Head, Middle Mouse and the Isles of Scilly; - Discussion of the Isles of Scilly Predator Eradication scheme more generally. <p>In respect of the updates on the project surveys of Worms Head and Middle Mouse, their content and their availability to the examination, the RSPB refers the Examining Authority to its answer to our answer to question OR.1.29 in our response to ExQ1 (see REP3-066). Nothing in the Applicant's comments change our position at this time. We note that some of this information may only be available right at the end of the examination.</p> <p>We welcome the discussion relating to the publication redacted information on the Applicant's assessments of the capacity of suitable nesting habitat for Worms Head, Middle Mouse and the Isles of Scilly. We welcome and note the Applicant's commitment to publish its assessment in respect of the Isles of Scilly. However, we remain concerned</p>

ISH5 Action	Question to:	Question	RSPB response
			<p>that similar information in respect of Worms Head and Middle Mouse may not be provided. Without transparency on this information, it will remain impossible for the RSPB to advise the Examining Authority as to whether the Applicant's statements that these locations would be capable of meeting different levels of predicted impacts on Guillemots and Razorbills from the Flamborough and Filey Coast SPA are correct.</p> <p>We have noted the discussion in respect of the mechanism by which Dogger Bank South may access a future Isles of Scilly Predator Eradication Project. We will await further information and clarity, when that is available, before commenting further.</p>