



Offshore Petroleum Regulator
for Environment & Decommissioning

The Conservation of Offshore Marine Habitats and Species Regulations 2017

Protection of Wild Birds in UK Offshore Waters

The Conservation of Offshore Marine Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 consolidated the provisions contained in the Offshore Marine Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 2007 and subsequent amending instruments, and made minor modifications reflecting changes to related legislation. The 2017 regulations give protection to wild birds, their eggs and nests in UK offshore waters.

Wild Birds and Offshore Installations

OPRED has become aware that the presence of wild birds on some offshore installations is presenting some operational challenges for the oil and gas industry, particularly in the context of decommissioning activities. The protection of wild birds, their eggs and nests under the Conservation of Offshore Marine Habitats & Species Regulations 2017 means that certain activities may be restricted or prohibited at specific times of the year (and will depend on the species of wild bird that may be present and/or in the geographical area). OPRED therefore strongly advise that industry consider whether the presence of wild birds may affect their proposed activities, including decommissioning and plug and abandonment activities (for example, rig mobilisation). In some cases, there may be potential to make an application for a wild birds licence (providing certain licensing tests are met). All environmental applications made to OPRED, including Environmental Appraisals and Environmental Assessment Justifications, should include baseline information on relevant bird species and populations (and details of protected sites, as appropriate) and assess the effects of the proposed activities, accordingly.

OPRED is working on guidance for industry on the protection of wild birds, their eggs and nests in UK offshore waters and this will be published in due course. In the meantime, OPRED is working closely with industry on specific cases and taking advice from the Joint Nature Conservation Committee, as appropriate. If you have any queries please contact the appropriate OPRED Environmental Manager for assistance via BST@beis.gov.uk

Kind regards
Business Support Team