

Dogger Bank Special Area of Conservation (SAC) MMO byelaw: Information sheet

Summary

The Marine Management Organisation (MMO) has made a byelaw to protect important habitats and species that rely on them in the Dogger Bank SAC. The byelaw will prohibit bottom towed fishing across the whole site to protect sensitive sandbank habitat within the SAC.

The Dogger Bank SAC is one of 40 sites in English offshore waters that contribute to the UK Blue Belt of protected areas. It is situated in the North Sea and is the largest single continuous expanse of shallow sandbank in UK waters. At 12,331 km² it is around five times the size of the Lake District National Park.

Why these management measures matter

The Dogger Bank sandbank was formed by glacial processes over thousands of years and formed part of a land bridge between Great Britain and mainland Europe before being submerged through sea-level rise. The sandbank provides habitats for a wide range of fish species such as cod, plaice, common skate and angel shark, as well as invertebrates including crabs, starfish, brittlestars and burrowing worms, which provide an important food source for larger animals. Soft corals known as 'dead man's fingers' are also found here, as well as long-lived species such as the ocean quahog, a type of clam which can live to over 500 years old. The site is an important location for sandeels, which are a vital food source for seabirds such as puffins and kittiwakes, as well marine mammals such as harbour porpoises and grey and common seals.



Sandbank and sandeels (left © JNCC/Cefas) dead man's fingers (centre) black-legged kittiwake (right) © 1284714370, 1021650742 iStock

Effects of these management measures

The measures will protect this important habitat, enhancing biodiversity and providing a safe haven for juvenile fish to grow, which may contribute to commercial fish stocks in neighbouring areas.

Based on recent years, annual fisheries landings which would be impacted by these measures are £6,452,648 of which £2,920,463 are from UK vessels. Taking into account operating costs, we have estimated that these measures will have a financial impact to UK fishers who fish in the area using bottom towed gears of up to £0.5 million per year. MMO is taking a proportionate management approach to protect and enhance our marine ecosystems and secure a more sustainable future for coastal communities, the fishing industry and future generations.

For more information about the Dogger Bank SAC and its habitats and species please see the map overleaf and the [JNCC Site Information Centre](#).





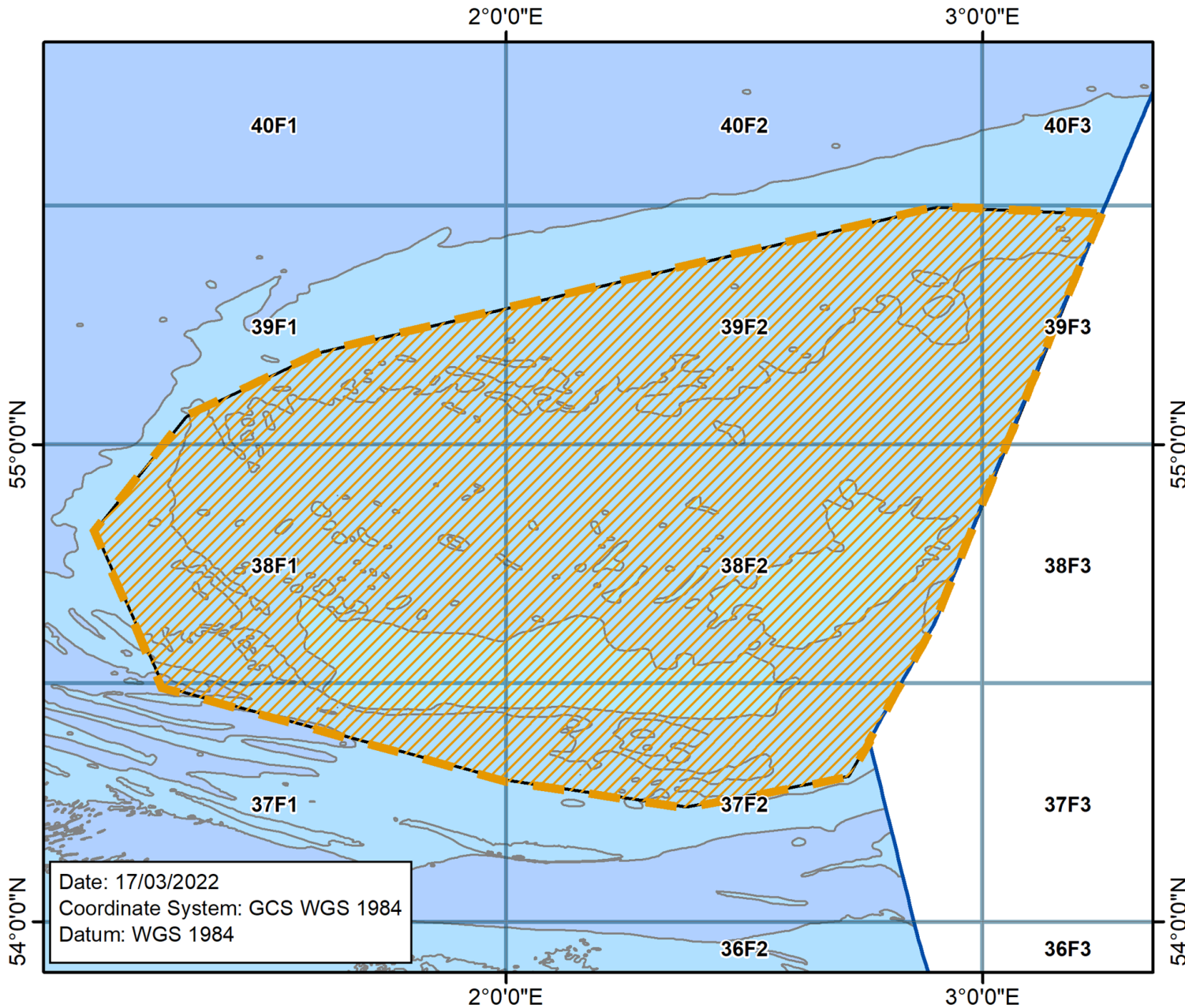
Marine
Management
Organisation

Dogger Bank Special Area of Conservation (Specified Area) Bottom Towed Fishing Gear Byelaw 2022

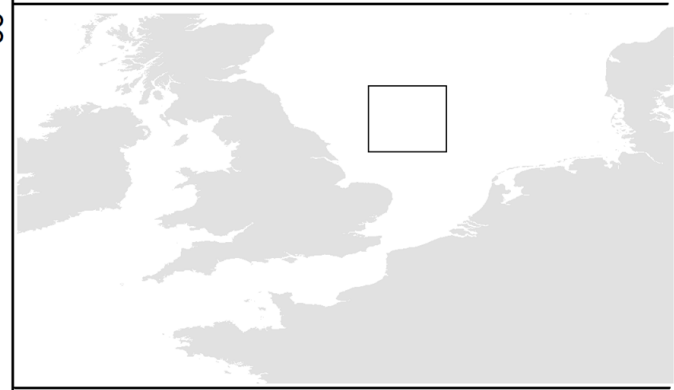
- Bathymetry Contours (UKHO)
- UK EEZ
- ICES Statistical Rectangles
- Dogger Bank SAC
- Specified area (bottom towed fishing prohibited)

Depth Areas (UKHO)

- <=25m
- <=50m
- <=100m



Date: 17/03/2022
Coordinate System: GCS WGS 1984
Datum: WGS 1984



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