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Date: 12 March 2008
Our reference: PRAC0809/AC
Subject: Response to the consultation on the selection of UK offshore Special Areas of Conservation

Dear Mr Tasker,

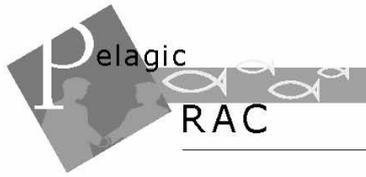
Thank you for requesting the Pelagic RAC to comment on your consultation document on the selection of seven UK offshore Special Areas of Conservation. Taking into account the aim of this formal consultation:

- to seek the view of all interested parties on the scientific case for identification of the seven areas as offshore SACs;
- and the assessments of the likely economic impact of designation of each site;

the Pelagic RAC wishes to make the following comments:

Firstly, the Pelagic RAC would like to point out that some of these areas are important areas as regards pelagic fishing. Secondly, since pelagic fishing is conducted above the bottom it will not damage the seabed habitat. The Pelagic RAC is therefore of the unanimous opinion that pelagic fishing activities do not compromise the conservation aims of these seven areas. It should be noted that the very last thing a pelagic vessel wants to do is put its gear onto the bottom, especially if it is a rocky bottom or in the presence of reefs.

In accordance with our previous recommendations on Special Areas of Conservation, (attached are two copies of Pelagic RAC recommendations on (1) four SACs to the West of Ireland and (2) the Lyme Bay area in the United Kingdom) the Pelagic RAC requests that pelagic vessels fishing mid water (as is the norm for pelagic vessels) are specifically exempted from any management measures envisaged for these seven areas. The precedence for such an exemption for pelagic vessels is included in the 2008 TACs and quotas Council Regulation (40/2008) for the special areas of conservation to West of Ireland.



Hoping that you will accommodate this request and wishing you every success in the process,

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Aukje Coers', written over a horizontal line.

Aukje Coers
Pelagic RAC secretariat

c.c. Mr Fokion Fotiadis, Ms Isabelle Viallon