



Screening Determination for Appropriate Assessment

Draft Fisheries Natura Plan, Mussel Seed in Castlemaine Harbour, 2024-2029

The Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine received a draft Fisheries Natura Plan (2024-2029) for the mussel seed fishery in Castlemaine Harbour in February 2024. If implemented, the draft Plan sets out arrangements for the fishing of mussel seed (*Mytilus edulis*) in Castlemaine Harbour during a period from February 2024 to December 2029, including survey arrangements, harvesting rules, activity monitoring, etc. As with the previous Plan, the draft Plan would allow Castlemaine operators to source mussel seed from the Irish Sea. The Plan notes this is not intended to increase the volume of seed relayed in Castlemaine Harbour, but rather to supplement the seed resource there, which is at times not available. The Plan also describes the husbandry arrangements for mussels in Castlemaine Harbour.

Having regard to guidance from the European Commission and existing case law, as well as the recommendations of a Marine Institute screening assessment report on the above draft Plan, the Minister has determined under regulation 4(2) of [SI 290 of 2013](#) (European Union (Birds and Natural Habitats) (Sea-fisheries) Regulations 2013) that the draft Plan may have significant impacts on Natura 2000 sites and therefore appropriate assessment of the draft Plan is required in advance of determining whether or not the activities it describes may take place.

Minister's Signature: _____

Date: _____

Charlie McConalogue

8 / May / 2024.