



ANNUAL NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER 2025

OffshoreWind
IndustryCouncil

Offshore
Wind Evidence
+ Change
Programme

THE CROWN
ESTATE

AIMS

To investigate the **effectiveness** of certain strategic compensation measures through desk-based **feasibility case studies** and **practical pilots** to increase confidence and outline compensation options for the offshore wind industry.

To create a **toolbox** of collaborative compensation lessons learnt, incorporating measures and a mechanism by which these can be **secured, delivered** and **relied upon** in plan and project consenting decisions.

OBJECTIVES

Develop and test a delivery mechanism(s) and governance arrangements to allocate benefits and share risks across multiple schemes.

Test and monitor potential strategic compensation measures through a series of practical pilots and desk-based studies.

Define and test the most appropriate approaches to monitoring and managing strategic measures (including adaptive management).

Provide options that satisfy Habitat Regulations / Marine and Coastal Access Act compensation requirements for offshore wind plans and projects.

Strategic Compensation Studies

Work Packages

WP1 Artificial Nesting Structures (ANS)

Site selection of optimum locations for ANS for auks, trialling ANS for multiple species, enhanced monitoring, roadmap for repurposing offshore infrastructure.

WP2 Predator Reduction

Avian predator reduction literature review and practical trials, delivery mechanism pilot, enhanced monitoring & biosecurity and efficacy of control measure.

WP3 Habitat creation and restoration

Habitat creation and restoration and wider ecosystem benefits and monitoring of habitat impact and recovery (sandbanks and reef).

WP4 Infrastructure Removal

Mapping of redundant infrastructure in UK waters, monitoring removal of infrastructure for effectiveness.

WP5 Delivery mechanism and overarching

Develop and test delivery mechanism, standardised approach to monitoring SC measures, adaptive management principles, compensation forecasting, lessons learnt, and interconnectivity of seabirds with national site network study.

WP6 Supporting Measures

Breeding seabird colony needs, reducing disturbance for auks in Cornwall, bycatch monitoring and mitigation, red-throated diver opportunities and investigating measures that could support prey availability.

Progress June 2024 to June 2025

WP2a Reducing Pressures from Avian Predators

Literature review looking at the scale of opportunity for reducing pressures from avian predators as a strategic compensation measure either in isolation or as part of a package of measures in the UK.

Key Findings

There is merit in progressing additional assessment of several of the different avian predator management methods given the current limited evidence of their effectiveness for seabirds. The recommendations are centred around practical trials of non-lethal interventions such as habitat modification/nest cover and refuges, artificial burrows and nest boxes and deterrence measures such as bamboo canes and bioacoustics.

Next Steps

The SCS project is now scoping out opportunities for further work in this area to further develop and monitor identified methodologies for effectiveness.

WP2d Efficacy of control of measures

This review considered whether certain interventions are more effective than others in reducing predator numbers and sought to identify opportunities to test novel or alternative predator reduction techniques.

Key Findings

Trialling additional techniques for mammalian predators is not be a priority under the SCS project. This is due to considerable scientific evidence on the effectiveness of mammalian predator eradication on islands and the use of fencing for predator exclusion (both already approved as strategic compensation measures for seabirds in the UK).

Next Steps

The SCS project is not carrying out any further work in relation to this task.



Progress June 2024 to June 2025

WP2e Isles of Scilly Predator Reduction Pilot

The SCS project has been supporting the development of a strategic predator reduction measure on the Isles of Scilly as part of the Seabird Recovery Project.

The SCS project has provided funding for preparatory surveys which include:

- Rat genetic testing to look for rodenticide resistance and establish a genetic connectivity database.
- Rat distribution surveys will inform planning of the eradication phase.
- Seabird Habitat Assessments provide a visual assessment of the available seabird breeding habitat on the Isles of Scilly and give an indication of how many breeding birds the archipelago could support if the pressure from invasive rats was removed.

WP6ai Southwest Disturbance Reduction

There is an increasing need for offshore wind projects and plans to secure ecologically sound, cost-effective compensation for seabirds, but currently a limited number of approved compensation measures. Recreational disturbance reduction has the potential to be a viable strategic measure, particularly in the southwest, which has a thriving tourism sector, primarily reliant on coastal recreation on land and at sea.

The SCS project has been providing a facilitation role between offshore wind developers and other relevant stakeholders looking to reduce anthropogenic disturbance at auk colonies in southwest England. SCS is supporting the development of a project looking to understand disturbance at auk colonies, test and implement on-water and land-based disturbance reduction methods and review the effectiveness of these interventions.



Progress June 2024 to June 2025

WP6b Offshore Bycatch Study

Bycatch monitoring on two fishing vessels to aid understanding of the prevalence of seabird bycatch off the coast of Cornwall. The aim of the study was to:

- Report recorded bycatch (with a focus on common guillemot)
- Compare recorded bycatch rates with published estimates; and
- Identify any potential relationship between guillemot bycatch and a range of temporal, spatial and operational (fishery gear and approach) variables.

Key Findings

- Guillemot bycatch (as well as other species) is occurring offshore.
- A range of factors affect bycatch rate including spatial/temporal difference in seabird density, net length/soak time and target catch
- Month and net length significantly influenced guillemot bycatch rate

Next Steps

Practical trials of specific potential bycatch mitigation measures to help progress the evidence base.

WP6d Red-throated Diver (RTD) Recommendations

Overview of RTD compensation measures and opportunities for improving ecological outcomes which could be applied by the offshore wind sector.

Knowledge Gaps

- Improve understanding of RTD recovery from displacement and disturbance.
- Abundance and distribution of wintering RTD – survey data out of date.
- Understanding of supporting habitat characteristics.
- Understanding of connectivity between breeding and wintering populations.

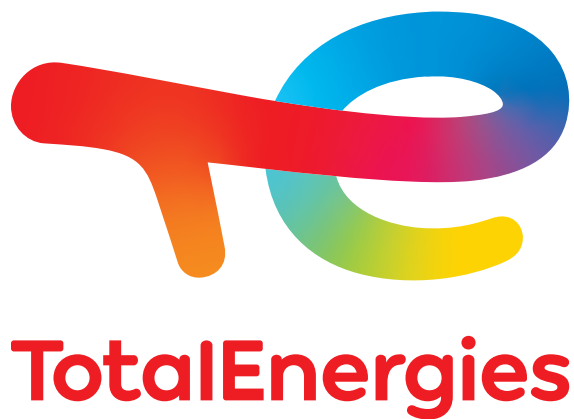
Recommendations for further work (outside of SCS project)

- Survey wintering Special Protection Areas with additional concurrent data and update abundance estimates.
- Investigate periods of RTD occupancy at each SPA.
- Collaborative approach to future surveys and implementing strategic compensation measures.

Year 2 forward Look July 2025 to June 2026

Year 2	SCS Outputs
WP1 Artificial Nesting Structures	• 1a Location of ANS for auk site selection report complete • 1d Repurposing offshore infrastructure roadmap complete
WP2 Predator Reduction	• 2a Avian predator practical trials commence • 2b Predator reduction feasibility work underway • 2e Isles of Scilly habitat assessment report complete
WP3 Habitat Creation and Restoration	• 3a Habitat creation/restoration practical trials commence • 3b Monitoring habitat impact and recovery commences
WP4 Infrastructure Removal	• 4a Infrastructure removal mapping complete • 4b Infrastructure removal monitoring commences
WP5 Overarching Actions and Delivery Mechanism	• 5a Delivery mechanism legal work complete • 5c Adaptive management principles and guidance complete • 5e National site network Interconnectivity phase 2 work complete • 5f Compensation lessons learnt workshops and summary report complete
WP6 Supporting Measures	• 6a ESCaRP breeding package work underway • 6ai South west disturbance reduction 2-year pilot (2026-2027) • 6c Bycatch mitigation trial report complete

SCS Project Support



SCS Project Advisory Group





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