

12 COMMERCIAL FISHING

This section considers the effect of the proposed placement activities on the commercial fishing industry. Any in-combination effects are discussed in Section 16.

12.1 Existing Environment

The Thames Estuary is an important commercial fishery for both fish and shellfish. Fishing methods include trawling, gillnetting, potting, dredging, long-lining and rod and line fishing. Sole and cockles are believed to be the two most important fisheries.

The North Edinburgh Placement site was selected in discussion with representative of KESFC and local fishermen. The boundaries of the site were delineated by KESFC. The site was chosen as there is no fishing within the North Edinburgh Channel or on the banks directly adjacent to the Channel. Nearby channels are trawled for sole and sandbanks are drift-netted, also for sole. The nearest commercial shellfish beds are approximately 6km from the placement site, see Section 8.1.2.

12.2 Interference with fishing activity

The placement site was chosen in discussion with the fishermen as the area that would have the least interference with fishermen from either Kent or Essex. The fishermen will be kept informed of operations via KESFC. Trawling for sole in the deeper channels occurs in April and early May, after which the sole move up onto the banks. Placement operations will not be taking place between March and May due to the PLA's commitment to, where possible, avoid dredging the Princes Channel during this period. An effect of **negligible significance** is predicted on the fishing industry.

12.3 Sand Blanketing Nearby Fishing Grounds

Section 4 explains the coastal process mechanisms and the predicted fate of the placed sand. It is predicted that the placed sand will replace the existing seabed as the mobile layer and, given the similarity between the two materials, future sand distribution from the North Edinburgh Channel is predicted to follow current pathways. A **negligible impact** is predicted on fishing grounds and this will be confirmed by the bathymetric monitoring.

12.4 South Falls Disposal Site

Fishing off the south Kent coast comprises various forms of netting and potting for lobsters and crabs. There is no available information on the importance of the area around the South Falls disposal site for fishing activity. It can be surmised that given the area is not within a sandbank system there will be less sand moving around than in the North Edinburgh Channel. Any static fisheries may therefore be more sensitive to large

inputs of sand (as proposed in this project) than the North Edinburgh Channel. However, the site is a licensed disposal area and has previously received smaller quantities of sand.

12.5 Summary of Impacts

The North Edinburgh Placement site was specifically chosen to avoid impacts on the fishing industry.