

Recd From:

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Lobster v-notching

'V-notching' is one of the most important technical conservation measures for the Irish lobster stock. The practice was introduced to Ireland in the early 1990's from Maine in the USA, where it is used in the American Lobster fishery, by BIM with the co-operation of the Shellfish Research Laboratory Carna, Udaras na Gaeltachta and most importantly, the inshore fishing industry. It involves cutting a small notch in one of the flaps on the tail of a female lobster creating an easily recognised mark that will remain on the lobster at least until the next time it moults its shell and possibly for up to two moults. When a lobster is marked in this way, it is illegal to land, possess or sell such a lobster and as a result if a v-notched lobster is caught fishermen will release it immediately. This ensures that the lobster will get an opportunity to breed at least once before the notch grows out as female lobsters generally breed and moult in alternate years. The aim is to boost egg production and thus recruitment to the stock through protecting a proportion of the female lobster population from fishing pressure.

As returning lobster to the wild obviously impacts on the earnings of fishermen the practice has been supported by National and EU grant aid since it was introduced, initially under the PESCA grant aid programme and latterly under the NDP. This grant aid is administered through a strong network of locally based associations and co-ops around the coast.

Between 2002 and 2004 approximately 30,000 lobsters have been v-notched all around the country of which 23,000 were also tagged. Up to 30 co-ops and fishermen's associations from all around the coast have been involved.

The program will run until 2007 and when completed will enable fisheries scientists to observe trends in Catch per Unit Effort (CPUE) data over a 6 year period, examine the numbers of v-notched lobster as proportion of the legal catch and to try relate the numbers of undersize lobsters to the numbers of v-notched lobsters. In addition other data such as moult increments and size frequency data will be provided. This information will be crucial to the informed development of a Management Plan for the Lobster fishery under the Shellfish Management Framework and its collection would not be possible without the keen participation of local fishermen's co-ops, associations and the financial assistance under the National Development Plan and the EU FIFG measure through the Supporting Measures Programme

"The V-notching group represented here today is one such associations"

Objection No.4

My name is William walker; I am chairman of a Lobster re-stocking group in Erris. We have members from Blacksod to Belderrig in north mayo.

I would like to point out before I continue, the fact that our objection is concentrating on the monitoring of the impact of the discharge to sea, does not indicate we are satisfied with the proposed location for this discharge.

In fact we believe the proposed location is "not appropriate", and must be reviewed.

Our objection relates to the monitoring programme included in the proposed determination.

It seems from reading the documentation, that Shell (or persons paid by shell) will undertake "all" the monitoring of the marine environment adjacent to the discharge of wastewaters into the sea.

We find this totally unacceptable, and would have expected that there would be regular state, or independent monitoring of the impact of the discharge, on the receiving waters, and wider marine environment around the discharge.

Self-policing of such an important task seems ludicrous when you think of the possible consequences of contamination of the marine environment.

We have several reports including the MLVC report, stating that some of the substances, which will be discharged to sea, have the ability to bio-accumulate and/or bio-magnify.

To have Shell or persons paid by Shell undertake this very

Important task of monitoring, does not give us the reassurance and confidence we need, to have faith in the monitoring.

We have also had the proposed monitoring regime assessed by an Independent expert, professor Peter Matthiessen (aquatic ecotoxicologist).

He has concluded that the proposed monitoring measures are insufficient, and he will suggest a revised monitoring programme.

There are many examples of monitoring of such discharges being undertaken by state or independent bodies.

I have included a few examples below.

Shetland

SOTEAG acts as an independent advisory group for both the local authority and the oil industry.

SOTEAG carries out more extensive monitoring programmes of the coastal and wider marine environment around the area of the terminal, and elsewhere.

For the purposes of mutual understanding of environmental changes, SOTEAG also receives a presentation from BP's consultant every year on their report and results, and discusses these with SOTEAG's Monitoring Committee's team of expert marine scientists, all of whom are independent of the local authority of oil industry, and these discussions take place in the presence of SOTEAG's own independent environmental monitoring contractors.

Canada

The results of compulsory industry monitoring are important to Alberta Environment. The monitoring results verify the general environmental performance of an industrial operation. The results also help the department assess compliance with specific performance requirements. It is a serious offense to fail to provide the required monitoring information or to provide false information. It is therefore in the interest of both government and industry to take measures to ensure the reliability of compulsory monitoring information.

Alberta Environment undertakes the following QA/QC activities related to compulsory monitoring data:

- establishes specific monitoring protocols, e.g. Alberta Stack Sampling Code and Air Monitoring Directive;
- undertakes spot audits of industry monitoring;
- inspects industries;
- undertakes monitoring programs to verify industry monitoring;
- reviews industry QA/QC procedures;
- reviews compulsory monitoring data for anomalies or inconsistencies; and
- takes action immediately to address monitoring reliability issues including enforcement action if appropriate.

These activities combined with the internal QA/QC activities of industry are intended to ensure the credibility of the overall industry compulsory monitoring programs.

Australia

The EPA licences discharges that requires proponent monitoring as set out in their licence conditions. Monitoring results are reported to the EPA for auditing to ensure compliance is met.

In addition the EPA undertakes routine environmental condition monitoring. Monitoring consists of monthly water quality samples for nutrients, toxicants, and physico-chemical parameters.

Professor Matthiessen will now suggest a revised monitoring programme for the discharge.