

## Green, Matthew

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**From:** navigation safety <navigationsafety@mcga.gov.uk>  
**Sent:** 24 December 2024 14:48  
**To:** Green, Matthew  
**Subject:** RE: Environmental Grab Sampling in Wales

**Rhybudd:** Deilliodd yr e-bost hwn o'r tu allan i'r sefydliad. Peidiwch â chlicio dolenni, atodiadau agored nac sganio codau QR oni bai eich bod yn cydnabod yr anfonwr ac yn gwybod bod y cynnwys yn ddiogel.

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Dear Matthew,

Thank you for the information regarding the proposed Environmental Grab Sampling in Wales

We note that the works are for the Natural Resources Wales's and the Environment Agency's to conduct small scale (0.1m<sup>2</sup>) seabed sediment grab sampling in Welsh territorial waters over the next three years.

We note that some of the works fall within the jurisdiction of a Statutory Harbour Authority (SHA) and therefore they are responsible for the safety of navigation within their waters.

On the understanding that the following takes place, the MCA would have no significant concerns to raise with regards to the safety of navigation and would be satisfied that the risk is relatively low on this occasion:

1. All maritime safety legislation is complied with;
2. Local notification is issued to marine users, including fishermen's organisations, relevant authorities and other local stakeholders, to ensure that they are made fully aware of the activity at least five days before commencement of the works;
3. [Zone31@hmcg.gov.uk](mailto:Zone31@hmcg.gov.uk) and [Zone28@hmcg.gov.uk](mailto:Zone28@hmcg.gov.uk) must be notified prior to commencement of activities.
4. A notification must be sent to The Source Data Receipt team, UK Hydrographic Office (email: [sdr@ukho.gov.uk](mailto:sdr@ukho.gov.uk)) of commencement of the licensed activities, at least 10 days before commencement of the works. The information supplied must include the start date and end date, a description of the works, positions of the work area (WGS84), and details of any marking arrangements.
5. The site that are within port limits and the applicant should gain the approval/agreement of the responsible local navigation authority or the Harbour Authority/Commissioners/Council. They may wish to issue local warnings to alert those navigating in the vicinity to the presence of the works, as deemed necessary.

Please can you confirm that you accept the above risk mitigations?

Kind Regards

**Sam Chudley**

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**From:** Green, Matthew <Matthew.Green@cyfoethnaturiolcymru.gov.uk>

**Sent:** 20 December 2024 16:35

**To:** navigation safety <navigationsafety@mcga.gov.uk>

**Cc:** Haines, Lucie <Lucie.Haines@cyfoethnaturiolcymru.gov.uk>; Marine Licensing <marinelicensing@cyfoethnaturiolcymru.gov.uk>; Camp, Samantha <samantha.camp@environment-agency.gov.uk>; Whitcombe, James <james.whitcombe@environment-agency.gov.uk>

**Subject:** Environmental Grab Sampling in Wales

**Importance:** High

Dear Maritime and Coastguard Agency,

As a requirement of our upcoming Marine Licence application for grab sampling, I am writing to notify you of Natural Resources Wales's and the Environment Agency's intention to conduct small scale (0.1m<sup>2</sup>) seabed sediment grab sampling (with the Environment Agency, Briggs Marine Contractors and using our own vessels) in Welsh territorial waters over the next three years (see charts/data attached for planned target sites).

**Query:**

**Please can I check that you consider the described activities (relating to our Marine Licence application) will not cause any undue navigational risk to sea traffic (risk to others)?** Information below and attached.

Please respond as soon as possible as we require a response before we can submit an application (sampling begins in March and licences take a while to process).

**Location:**

Maps/target positions (noted in spreadsheet and on map as red dots) are attached for planned sampling but we are applying to sample from spring highwater to 12nm of the Welsh coast as a precaution (so we can respond to incidents/changing monitoring priorities). Most of our sampling is likely to be at the target positions provided. For sampling not yet planned, some areas are more likely to be sampled than others, we can provide further information if required. Positions attached are in WGS84 Lat Long and British National Grid. The planned timing/locations of surveys are provided but this may change with changing priorities.

**Navigation:**

Due to the transient nature of grab sampling proposed and the precautions we/contractors take we believe there is not any risk to navigation. The vessels used to collect grab samples are bespoke coastal survey vessels frequently used for this type of work and will be appropriately signed and lighted in accordance with collision regulation rules and all maritime legislation will be complied

with. We are very experienced (we have been grab sampling for a long time, >20 years). Where appropriate, a Notice to Mariners will be sent prior to sampling and permission sought from local Harbour Authority. Sampling will almost exclusively be undertaken in the day time but occasionally we will be required to sample at night. We actively and carefully avoid any underwater infrastructure and all associated activities are risk assessed.

### **Methods:**

The vessel will locate the sampling station and remain stationary at that location for a short amount of time. A 0.1m<sup>2</sup> grab sampler is deployed from the stern gantry of the vessel using a winch until it makes contact with the sea bed, then a small amount of sediment is scooped up and the grab sampler is hauled back onboard. Either sediment is subsampled for sediment analysis or the entire grab is collected and then washed over a sieve on board (usually whilst in transit) using a large sieve. The invertebrates and remaining residue are then retained for laboratory analysis. The grab deployment/haul is a relatively short process (length of time depends on depth and sea conditions).

### **Vessels and sample site location:**

Grab sampling work will be undertaken by a dedicated scientific survey vessel, likely either the Severn Guardian or the Mersey *Guardian* operated by Briggs Marine and Environmental Services Ltd and the Environment Agency or one of Natural Resources Wales survey vessels (Skalmey and Pedryn).

The Briggs Guardian vessels are equipped with Trimble® HYDROpro™ software for real-time navigation and survey data acquisition (Figure 1). The primary survey GPS feeding into Trimble Hydropro software is a SIMRAD MX512 DGPS. In the wheelhouse, a Furuno SC-30 DGPS is used for vessel navigation and acts as a backup in case the primary fails. Vessel direction of travel is provided by the Koden KGC300 sat compass and also feeds into Hydropro. Samples are generally collected within 10 m from the target coordinate unless obstructed by fishing gear or other hazard, as guided by the software. The Skipper has a Hydropro repeater screen in the wheelhouse for positioning the vessel within the sampling target. NRW vessels are smaller vessels which don't need repeater software, the wheelhouses of all vessels is also equipped with an electronic plotter with up-to-date UKHO charts showing locations of cables, wrecks pipelines and structures.

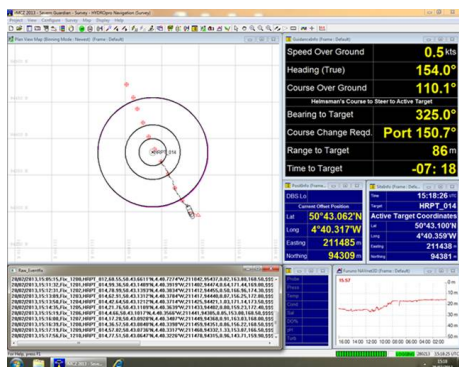


Figure 1. Trimble® HYDROpro™ software screen grab.

Skippers are briefed by the Scientist In Charge before the vessel leaves port to ensure everyone on board is familiar with the survey plan. When within range of coastal stations the survey vessel can be tracked in real-time via MarineTraffic e.g.

[https://www.marinetraffic.com/en/ais/details/ships/shipid:198782/mmsi:235091052/imo:0/vessel:SEVERN\\_GUARDIAN](https://www.marinetraffic.com/en/ais/details/ships/shipid:198782/mmsi:235091052/imo:0/vessel:SEVERN_GUARDIAN) and contact with other vessel traffic will be maintained via marine VHF.

### **What the data will be used for:**

Sampling is undertaken to support nature conservation and environmental monitoring. Under the principle of “gather once, use many times”, the data obtained will be used for several purposes including: MPA (primarily Habitats Regulations SAC) Condition assessment, assessment of condition of large shallow inlets and bays outside of SAC’s to inform Reg 9A reporting (Habitats Regulations), Water Environment Regulations Waterbody status assessment and investigation (operational and surveillance).

Please feel free to contact me if you have any further queries.

Many thanks,

Matthew Green (He/Him)

**Matthew Green (MSc)**

**Teitl swydd** / Job title: Senior Marine Monitoring Ecologist

**Adran** / Department: Marine Monitoring Team

**Rhif ffôn** / Phone number: 0300 0354105 | 07768142891

**Rhagenwau** / Pronouns: He/Him



**Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg a byddwn yn ymateb yn Gymraeg, heb i hynny arwain at oedi.**

Correspondence in Welsh is welcomed, and we will respond in Welsh without it leading to a delay.



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**cyfoethnaturiol.cymru  
naturalresources.wales**

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