

Wash Cockle and Mussel Byelaw 2021: Dredge Mussel Fishery Permit Conditions

2026 Wash Mussel Fishery



Persons operating under the Authority of a **Mussel Dredge Permit** for the purpose of fishing within either the **harvestable or re-laying** mussel fishery issued under paragraph 8 of the Wash Cockle and Mussel Byelaw 2021 must fish in accordance with the following conditions.

These Permit Conditions should be read in conjunction with the Wash cockle and mussel byelaw including the restrictions set out in Schedule 2 of the byelaw which also apply when operating in the mussel relaying fishery.

Note that the *Minimum Conservation Reference size for mussel in The Wash is 45mm under the Minimum Sizes Byelaw 2019 (as amended) and catch should be sorted for size in a harvestable fishery.*

These Permit Conditions come into effect at 2359hrs on 31 July 2026.

Interpretation

1. In these permit conditions:
 - a. the “Wash and North Norfolk Coast Special Area of Conservation” means the Area specified in Schedule 2 of these permit conditions;
 - b. “mussel dredge” means a dredge consisting of a mesh or net held open by a frame the bottom edge of which consists of a bar, blade or teeth which dislodges mussels from the surface of the mussel bed.
 - c. “UK VMS Hub” means the UK’s secure interface platform which is maintained by the Marine Management Organisation and the fisheries policy authorities to collect, store and manage fishing boat monitoring data for use by the MMO and fisheries policy authorities.

Prohibition

2. It is prohibited to fish for, take or remove from the fishery mussels from beds open only to the re-laying fishery for the purpose of selling direct to a market.
3. It is prohibited to fish for, take or remove from the fishery mussels from beds only open to the harvestable fishery with the intention of relaying for the purpose of aquaculture.

Open / closed areas

4. It is prohibited to fish for, take or remove from the fishery mussels from any area except those areas specified as open to the fishery in Schedule 1.
5. Areas designated as open or closed may be subject to change and Eastern IFCA will provide a minimum of 12 hours’ notice of such via text or e-mail to Permit Holders and Nominated Deputies.

Fishing methods

6. It is prohibited to fish for, take or remove from the fishery any mussels using bottom-towed-gear except a 'mussel dredge'.
7. Mussel dredges must not have any mechanism or device which enables the continuous lift of mussels from the dredge to the vessel.

Biosecurity measures

8. Subject to permit condition 9, it is prohibited to:
 - a. Relay any mussel catch outside of the Wash and North Norfolk Coast Special Area of Conservation; or
 - b. Sell catch for the purpose of it being re-laid outside of the Wash and North Norfolk Coast Special Area of Conservation.
9. The Authority may, after having received written advice / agreement from the relevant IFCA (if applicable), Natural England, the Fish Health Inspectorate and the Non-Native Species Secretariate, authorise the relaying of mussel catch outside of the Wash and North Norfolk Coast Special Area of Conservation or selling for the purpose of re-laying outside of the Wash and North Norfolk Coast Special Area of Conservation where a person provides evidence that in catching the mussel, they have taken all reasonable steps and all due diligence to avoid committing an offence under section 14 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

Vessel Monitoring Devices

10. Subject to condition 12, vessels with an overall length of less than 12m must at all times whilst at sea:
 - c. Have a Nemo I-VMS MMO type-approved I-VMS device installed onboard and operations;
 - d. Have the I-VMS unit switched on and transmitting data to the device supplier hub for onward transmission to the UK VMS Hub at least once in every 3 minutes; and
 - e. Ensure that the device has not been manually overridden, has not been tampered with or damaged and is not obstructed or interfered with so as to compromise or prevent the effective transmission of data to the UK VMS Hub.
11. Subject to condition 12, vessels with an overall length of 12m or more must at all times whilst at sea:
 - f. Have onboard a VMS or VMS+ unit;
 - g. Have the VMS or VMS+ unit switched on and transmitting data to the device supplier hub for onward transmission to the UK VMS Hub at least once in every 3 minutes; and
 - h. Ensure that the device has not been manually overridden, has not been tampered with or damaged and is not obstructed or interfered with so as

to compromise or prevent the effective transmission of data to the UK VMS Hub.

12. Where a vessel is not able to meet condition 10(b) or 11(b), condition 10 or 11 shall not apply if;
- a. the vessel has onboard a tracker provided by the Authority; and
 - b. the permit holder or nominated deputy remunerate the Authority for the associated subscription cost.

Contact details

13. It is prohibited to fish for, take or remove from the fishery mussels unless a valid e-mail address or mobile telephone number which is capable of receiving text messages has been provided to Eastern IFCA.

Requirement to notify

14. It is prohibited to fish for, take or remove from the fishery any mussels unless the Permit Holder or Nominated Deputy has notified Eastern IFCA of the estimated time of commencement of mussel harvesting at least 12 hours prior to such commencement.
15. Notification referred to in condition 14 must include the vessel name and port letter numbers, the intended fishing method and the name of the mussel bed intended to be fished and such notification must be in the form of a text message to the designated mobile phone number or email to the designated email address.

The designated mobile phone number is: 07748182025

The designated email address is: enforcement@eastern-ifca.gov.uk

Catch Returns Data

16. The Permit Holder or Nominated Deputy must submit the 'required catch data' to Eastern IFCA via 'text message' to a designated mobile telephone number or via email to a designated email address no later than 2 hours after returning to port.
17. The required catch data is as follows: the name and port letter numbers of the vessel used to fish for mussels, the fishing method, the estimated weight of mussels removed from the fishery, the name of the bed from which the mussels were removed and the destination of the mussels.

The designated mobile phone number is: 07748182025

The designated email address is: enforcement@eastern-ifca.gov.uk

Confirmation

These Permit Conditions come into effect at 2359hrs on 31 July 2026.

Signed:

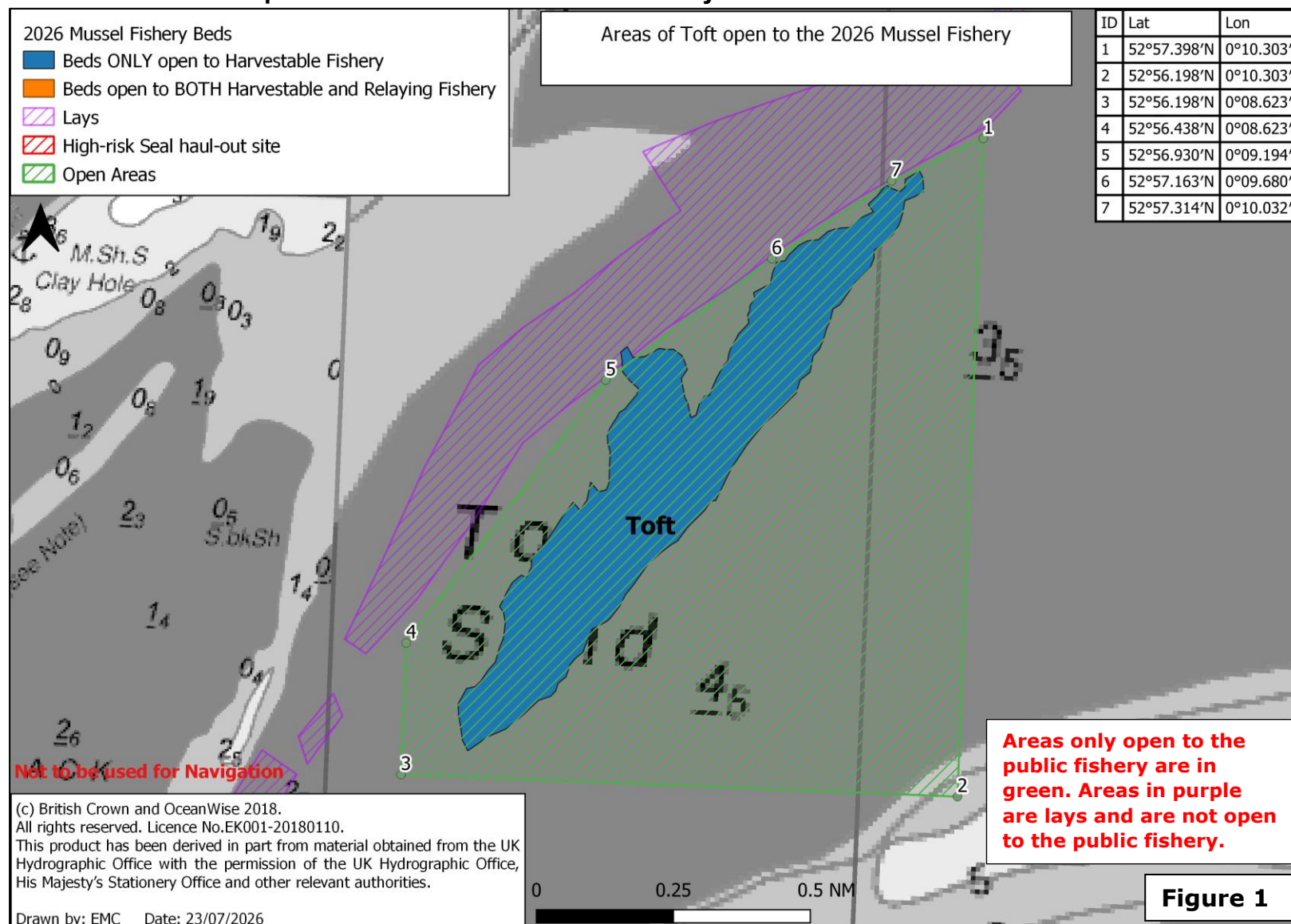
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Gregory'.

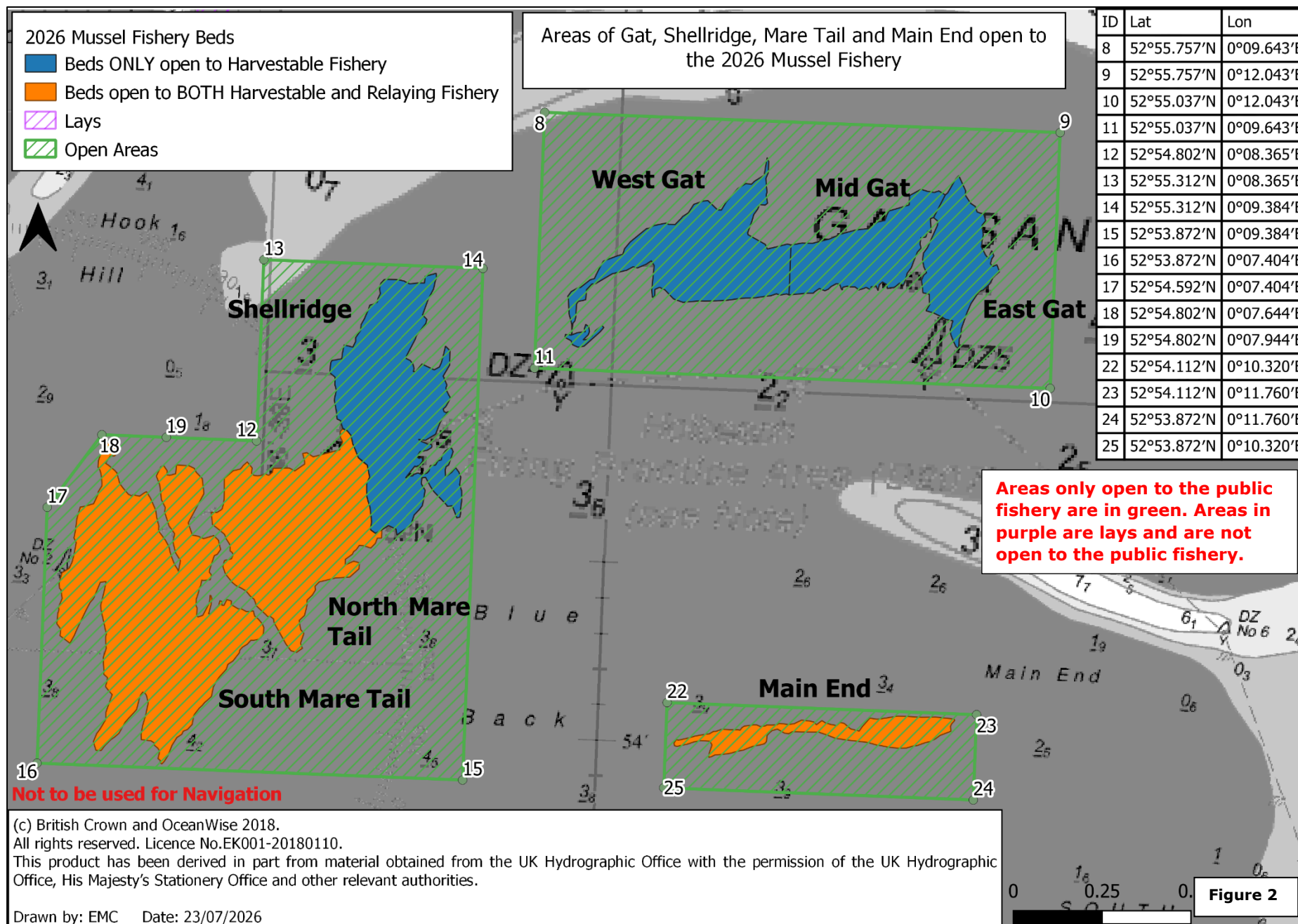
J. Gregory
CEO

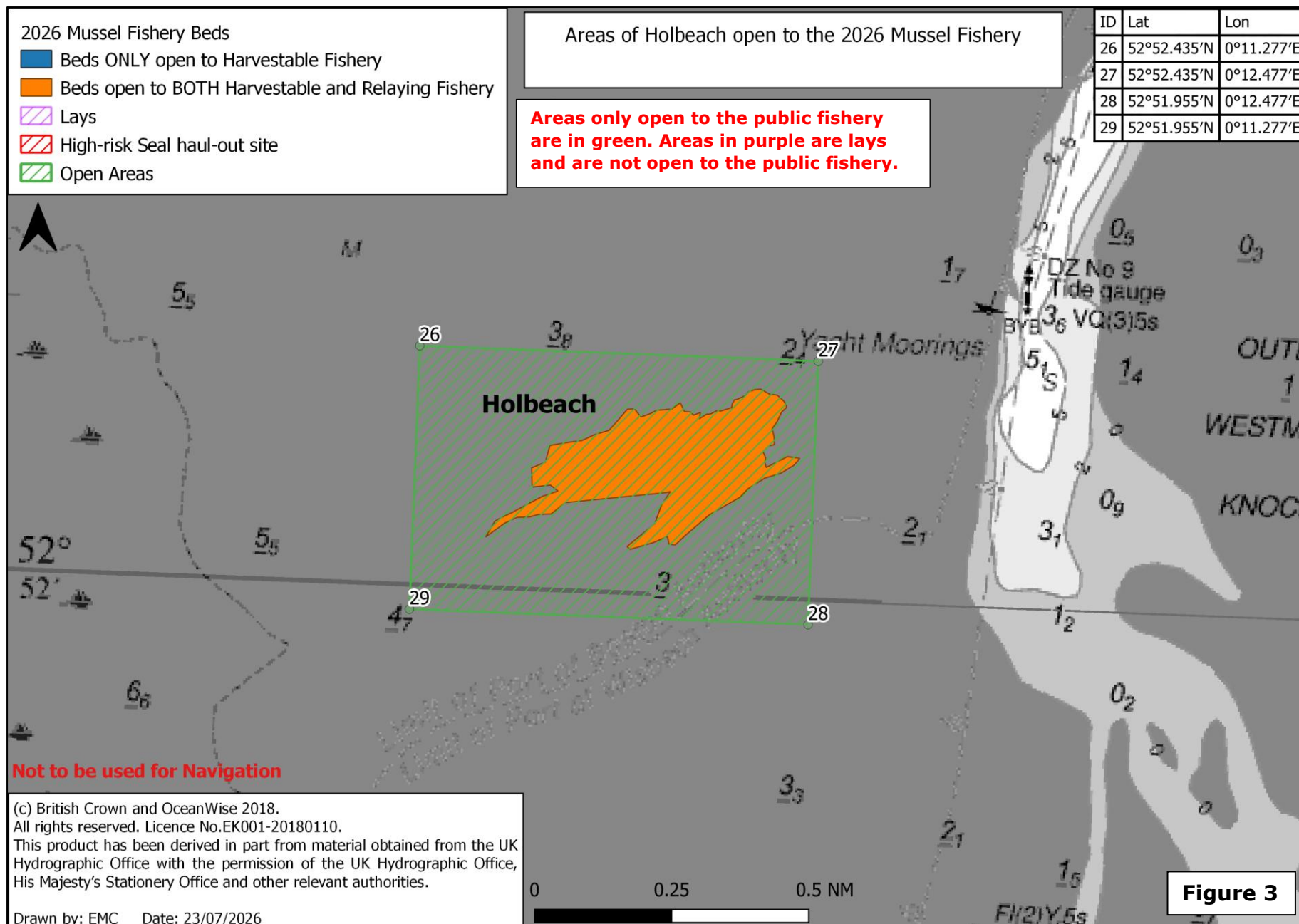
Failure to comply with an exemption condition is an offence under section 163(2) of the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009. The master, owner and charterer (if any) of a vessel used in the commission of an offence shall each be guilty of any such offence and liable to a fine on summary conviction.

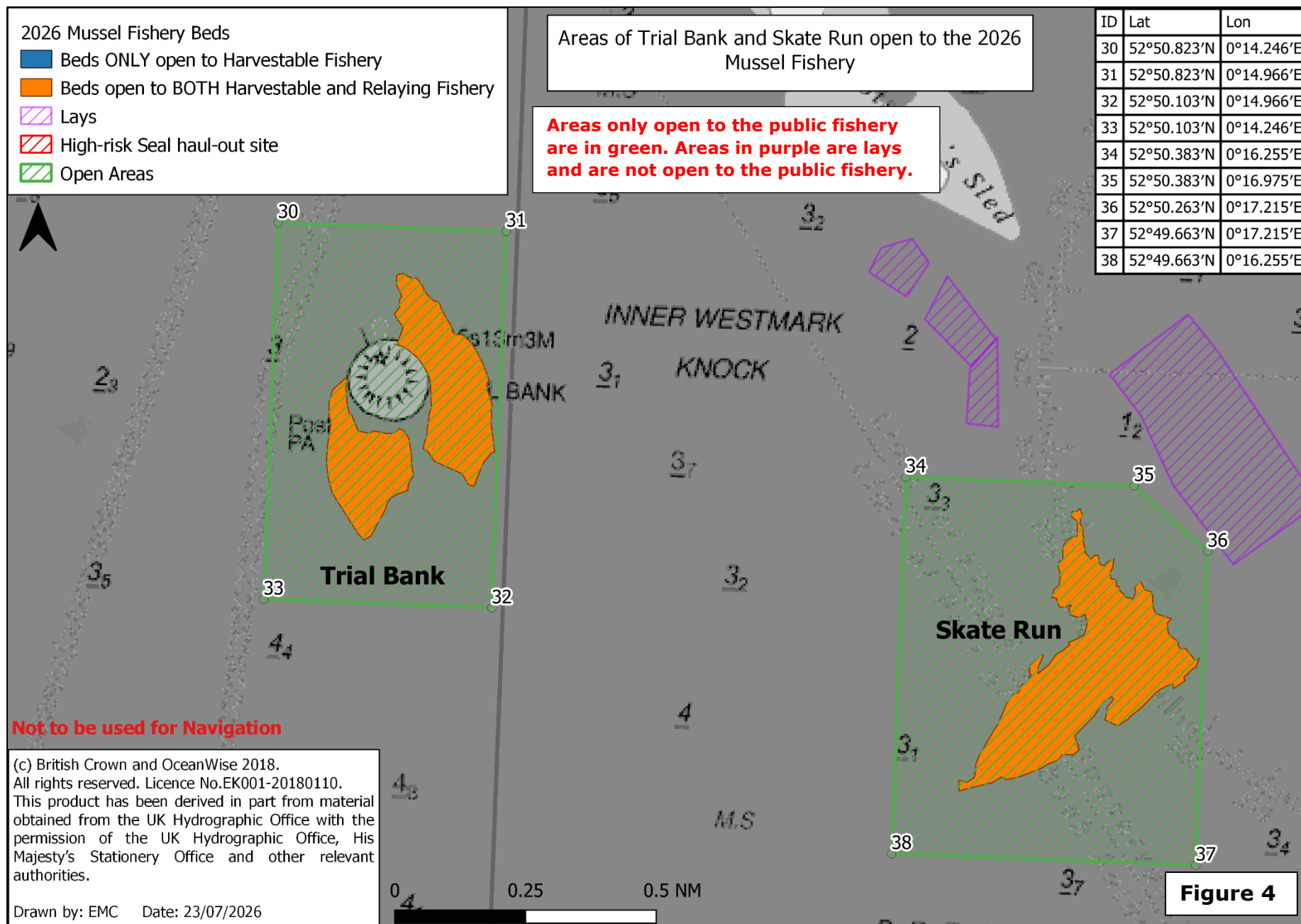
Permit conditions are subject to change and fishers will be notified of any amendments to the conditions.

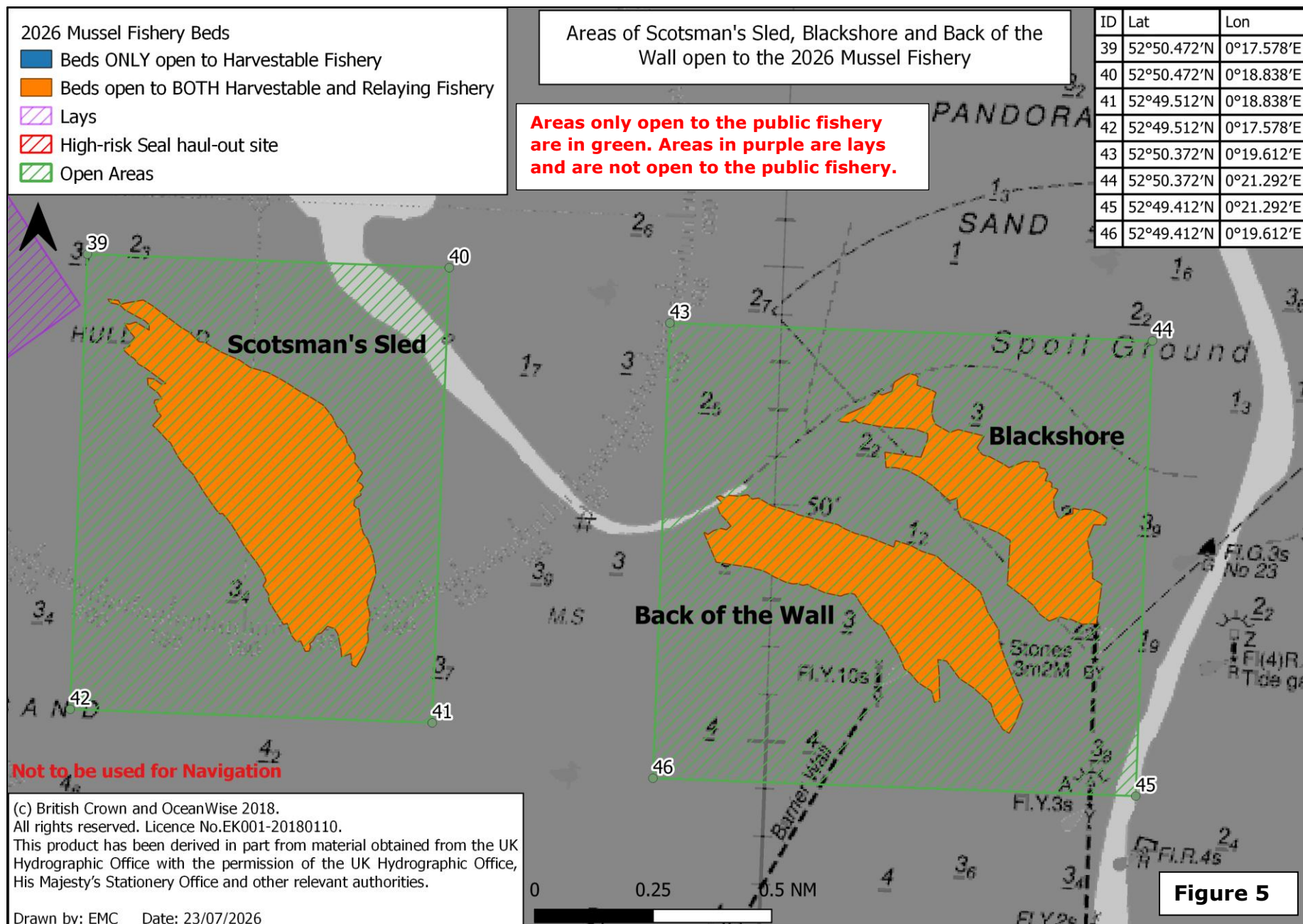
Schedule 1 – Areas open to the 2026 Wash Mussel Fishery

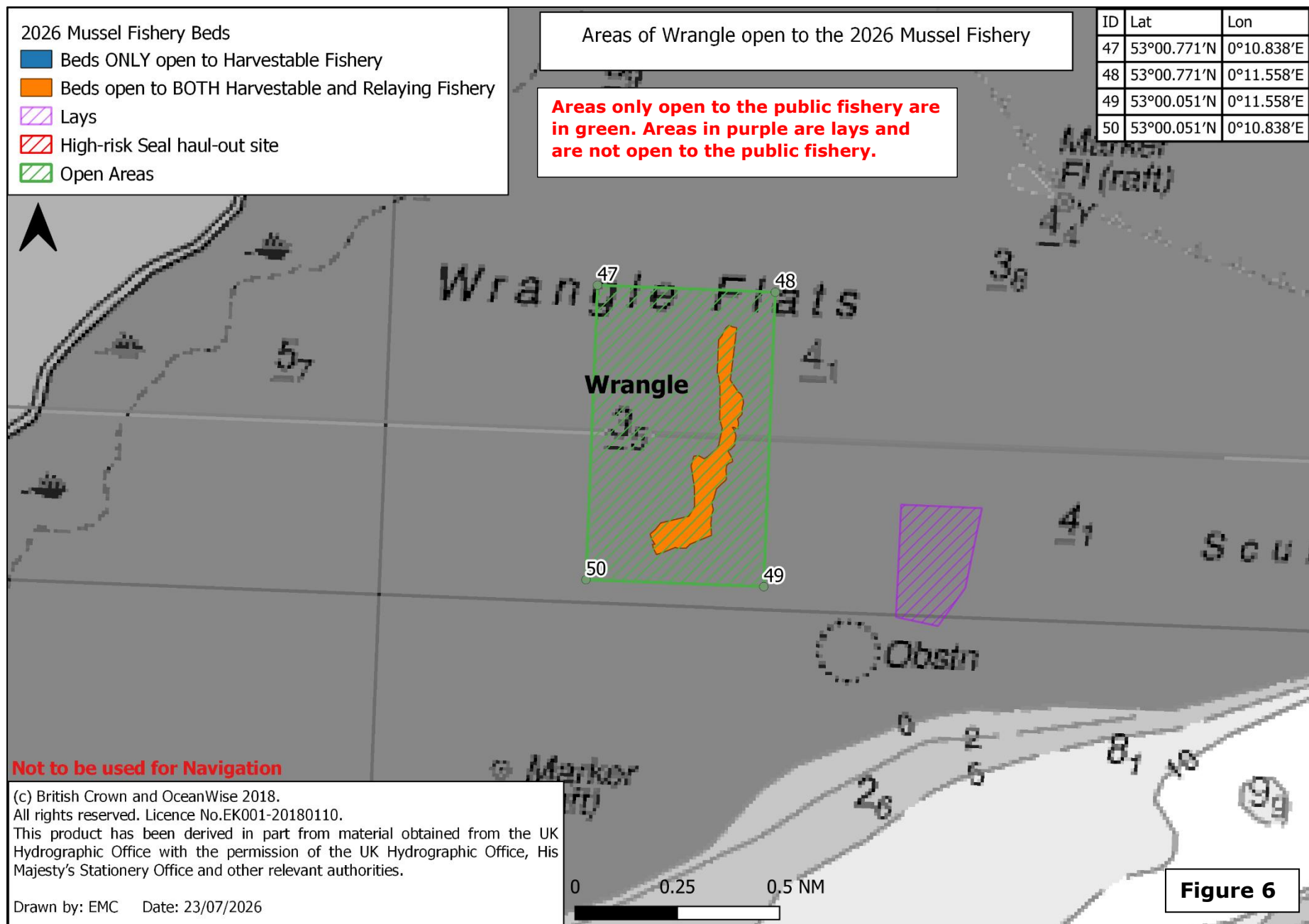












Schedule 2: Wash and North Norfolk Coast Special Area of Conservation

Wash and North Norfolk Coast Special Area of Conservation

The following table sets out the co-ordinates of the Wash and North Norfolk Coast Special Area of Conservation with regards to permit condition 6.

The Wash and North Norfolk Coast Special Area of Conservation is defined by a boundary drawn by the series of straight lines connecting points A to D and a line connecting point D to E which follows the land boundary which is to be taken as mean high water springs.

Point	Latitude	Longitude
A	53° 07'.69 N	00° 20'.55 E
B	53° 03'.66 N	00° 28'.16 E
C	53° 02'.73 N	01° 07'.55 E
D	52° 57'.16 N	01° 07'.10 E
E	53° 07'.69 N	00° 20'.55 E