# **Salamander Offshore Wind Farm**

**Offshore EIA Report** 

**Volume ER.A.4, Annex 12.6: Displacement Assessment SeabORD**



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# **Salamander Offshore Wind Farm: Annex ER.A.4.12.6: Displacement Assessment SeabORD**





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## **Authorisations**



## **Distribution List**







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## **Acronyms and abbreviations**







### <span id="page-7-0"></span>**1 Introduction**

- 1 This Annex supports the assessment of distributional responses undertaken for the proposed Salamander Offshore Wind Farm (hereafter 'the Salamander Project'). The Salamander Project is a proposed floating offshore wind farm being developed by Salamander Wind Project Company Limited (formerly called Simply Blue Energy (Scotland) Limited), a joint venture between Simply Blue Group, Ørsted and Subsea7. This annex will provide additional contextual information, produced using SeabORD, to support Annex ER.A.4.12.5: Displacement Assessment).
- 2 Within this annex, the term 'distributional responses' refers to two key responses assessed for seabirds in relation to the presence of offshore wind farms (OWFs): displacement and barrier effects (NatureScot 2023). More detail is provided in Annex ER.A.4.12.5: Displacement Assessment).
- 3 Following advice from The Marine Directorate Licensing Operations Team (MD-LOT) and NatureScot (Scoping Opinion dated 21<sup>st</sup> June 2023 and NatureScot advice on Scoping Report dated 5<sup>th</sup> May 2023), the primary method to assess distributional responses was the matrix method presented in the joint Statutory Nature Conservation Bodies (SNCBs) (JNCC *et al.,* 2022). It was requested that SeabORD be used to provide additional contextual information, where possible.
- 4 SeabORD is an individual-based model developed by the Centre of Ecology and Hydrology (CEH) which assesses the bio-energetic costs of distributional responses to individual birds and specific populations, quantified by the number of estimated mortalities. Within this application, SeabORD was run using a 'distance decay' function which assumes that as the distance from the colony increases, the density of foraging birds decreases. Distributional responses were assessed using SeabORD for the following species:
	- Black-legged kittiwake (*Rissa tridactyla*), hereafter 'kittiwake';
	- Common guillemot (*Uria aalge*), hereafter 'guillemot';
	- Razorbill (*Alca torda*); and
	- Atlantic puffin (*Fratercula arctica*), hereafter 'puffin'.
- 5 Currently, these are the only species SeabORD can predict the impact of distributional responses for; each of these are a key concern to the ornithological impact assessment for the Salamander Project.
- 6 Estimated seabird mortalities were assessed in relation to breeding colonies within Special Protection Areas (SPAs). For each of the colonies the Salamander Project lies within the species- specific mean max foraging range ± 1 SD for the four assessed species, and so were selected based on distance to the Salamander Project. The following SPA colonies were assessed:
	- Troup, Pennan and Lion's Head SPA;
	- Buchan Ness to Collieston Coast SPA;
	- Fowlsheugh SPA; and
	- East Caithness Cliffs SPA.
- 7 Multiple scenarios were run through SeabORD to determine estimated seabird mortalities. The effect on seabirds was assessed first for the Salamander Project alone and secondly with the presence of other





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nearby wind farms. The other offshore wind farms which were considered with the Salamander Project were:

- European Offshore Wind Deployment Centre (EOWDC);
- Moray East Offshore Windfarm, Moray West Offshore Windfarm and Beatrice Offshore Windfarm (BOWL), hereafter 'Moray Firth Wind Farms';
- Hywind Scotland Pilot Park Project, hereafter 'Hywind'; and
- Kincardine Floating Offshore Windfarm, hereafter 'Kincardine'.
- 8 Since the Moray Firth Wind Farms are situated alongside each other, these wind farms were run through SeabORD as one combined area (see Figure 1; Annex ER.A.4.12.5: Displacement Assessment).

### <span id="page-8-0"></span>**2 Methods**

#### <span id="page-8-1"></span>**2.1 SPA specific information**

9 SeabORD requires each colony to be represented by a single point near the coastline of the UK within the simulation. The chosen point is used as the start and end point of foraging trips generated by the model. During 'single' calibration and final 'paired' simulations the same points were used for each SPA as shown in [Table 1.](#page-8-3)



#### <span id="page-8-3"></span>**Table 1 SPA location and total number of pairs of key species per site**

#### <span id="page-8-2"></span>**2.2 Calibration**

- 10 To calibrate SeabORD for each species at each colony, 'single' simulations were run with no wind farms present. The only input values altered when running calibration simulations were the prey quantity (gram per unit volume) to produce outputs for a range of prey quantity values which can then be compared. Other values used to run calibration and final paired simulations are presented in [Table 2.](#page-9-1)
- 11 It is crucial the model is calibrated as the breeding season outputs in the final paired simulations will only use the values from the prey quantity (gram per unit volume) range selected. Technically, within the models only the chick-rearing period is included, this will be referred to as the breeding period





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throughout this annex. Therefore, to produce realistic results the prey range should be set to values expected during typical or 'moderate' breeding seasons.



#### <span id="page-9-1"></span>**Table 2 Values used for running baseline and the final paired simulations**

#### **2.2.1 Model input parameters and assumptions**

- <span id="page-9-0"></span>12 Due to a lack of Global Positioning System (GPS) tracking data for the colonies of interest, the distance decay method was used to determine the foraging sites of individuals. This assumes that as the distance from the colony increases, the density of foraging birds is expected to decrease (Searle *et al.,* 2018). For each species, the foraging range used within the model was mean max plus one standard deviation, taken from Woodward *et al*. (2019), as advised by NatureScot (NatureScot advice on Scoping Report dated 5<sup>th</sup> May 2023). The proportion of foraging occurring within this identified range was set to 0.975 [\(Table 2\)](#page-9-1). 0.975 was used to account for the fact that only a small number of individuals would be expected to fly further than the mean max plus one SD defined foraging range. These input values were then used by SeabORD to determine the foraging location of each individual adult, at each timestep of the simulation. The model assumes that every pair has one chick, however this is incorrect for kittiwake, as they generally have two chicks to provision for. This may impact adult survival as more foraging trips will need to be made, increasing energy expenditure. Following this, it is likely that the model underestimates impacts to kittiwake.
- 13 The assumed percentage of the population susceptible to distributional responses was taken from NatureScot advice (NatureScot, 2023 and NatureScot advice on Scoping Report dated 5<sup>th</sup> May 2023). Displacement rates were the same as used within the matrix approach (see Annex ER.A.4.12.5: Displacement Assessment) and it was assumed that all individuals susceptible to displacement would be





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barriered. The Offshore Array Area border (the area birds that are barriered will not be able to travel through) was set to 2km and the wind farm buffer (the area birds would be displaced to) set to 5km, following published SeabORD documentation (Searle *et al.,* 2018; Mobbs *et al.,* 2018).

#### <span id="page-10-0"></span>**2.2.2 Calculating prey ranges**

14 To determine the prey range expected during a 'moderate' breeding season (i.e. where environmental conditions are 'moderate') calibration simulations were run (i.e. simulations with no additional wind farms present). The only input parameters in the calibration simulations which differed from those used in the final paired simulations were the upper and lower prey quantity values used to generate the uniform prey distribution. After running multiple calibration simulations, the outputs were compared to determine the appropriate lower and upper prey quantity values. The lower prey quantity value was determined by comparing the percentage adult mass loss and percentage chick survival to those expected during 'moderate' breeding seasons [\(Table 3\)](#page-10-2).



#### <span id="page-10-2"></span>**Table 3 Adult percentage body mass loss and percentage chick survival used to determine prey values used in the final paired simulations. Values taken from Mobbs** *et al.* **(2018)**

#### <span id="page-10-1"></span>**2.2.3 Paired simulations**

15 Once the upper and lower prey quantities were determined through the calibration simulations, they were then used to run the final paired simulation for each species at each colony [\(Table 4\)](#page-11-0). The paired simulations compare presence of the Salamander Project against baseline conditions. Each pair selected a prey quantity within the range using random stratification and then simulated the breeding season with and without the selected wind farms present, meaning that 20 breeding seasons were simulated for each final simulation. Some colonies had relatively high population sizes, which can negatively affect the run-time of simulations (SSER, 2022). To manage run times 30% of the population was simulated for guillemot (54,755 pairs), razorbill (10,957 pairs) and kittiwake (18,130 pairs). As puffin populations were smaller 100% of the population was used (290 pairs).





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#### <span id="page-11-0"></span>**Table 4 Prey quantity range used for each final paired simulation**



- 16 Within the simulations, if individuals susceptible to distributional responses were assigned a foraging location within the Offshore Array Area they were displaced into the buffer.
- 17 Barrier navigation was set to 'Perimeter' for all simulations following the examples provided by Searle *et al.* (2018) and Mobbs *et al.* (2018). This assumes that displaced or barrier affected individuals will travel in a straight line until they encounter the Offshore Array Area or border and cannot travel through. Once these areas are encountered individuals will follow the perimeter of these areas until they can travel in a straight line again. All individuals that encounter land will use the  $A^*$  pathfinding option to find the shortest route around the land mass.
- 18 For each SPA two paired simulations were run, one for each scenario. The first scenario simulated the impacts of the Salamander Project alone (hereby referred to as the 'Project Alone' scenario) and the second scenario simulated the impacts of the Salamander Project in combination with EOWDC, the Moray Firth Wind Farms, Hywind and Kincardine (hereby referred to as the 'Cumulative' scenario).





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#### <span id="page-12-0"></span>**2.2.4 Bioenergetics in the model**

- 19 During each timestep of a simulation, adult birds were assigned a Daily Energy Expenditure (DEE). For the first timestep, the DEE was selected from a normal distribution of DEE values stored within SeabORD and for subsequent timesteps the DEE was set to match the energy expended by the individual in the previous timestep. DEE of chicks was kept constant throughout the simulation.
- 20 The daily activity budget of each adult consisted of four behaviours foraging, flight, time spent at the colony and time spent on the sea surface. The time spent flying and foraging to meet individuals' Daily Energy Requirements (DER) were generated by SeabORD for each individual, with a minimum of one hour assigned to time spent on the sea surface for each timestep. The remaining time was assigned to time spent at the colony. Once the time spent carrying out each activity was generated, the DEE for the timestep could be calculated. The DER of each adult was calculated by combining the energy gained (DEE divided by an assimilation efficiency) and half of the DEE of chicks, as it was assumed that both parents contributed equally. If DEE was greater than DER, then adults would lose body mass.
- 21 At the end of each timestep the current mass of each individual was compared to their mass at the beginning of the season. This information was used to determine the behaviours carried by both adults and chicks as shown in [Table 5.](#page-12-2) Chick mortality may occur during a timestep if the time an adult spends away from the nest is greater than the threshold determined by SeabORD. Predation risk was modelled to increase as the time left unattended increased until the specified threshold for each species.

<b>Species</b>	Age	% of initial mass	<b>Behaviour for next timestep</b>
All	Adult	>90	Stays at nest
All	Adult	80-90	Leaves chick unattended to reach DER
All	Adult	< 80	Abandon chick*
All	<b>Adult</b>	< 60	Assumed dead
All	Chick	< 60	Assumed dead
Puffin	<b>Chick</b>	$60 - 80$	Chick to burrow opening, increased mortality from predation or environmental conditions

<span id="page-12-2"></span>**Table 5 Behaviours of each individual determined by body mass**

<span id="page-12-1"></span>*\*If one parent abandons the chick, the other parent will also abandon the chick despite its own body mass.* 

#### **2.2.5 Annual mortalities predicted by SeabORD**

- 22 To determine the annual survival of adults, the mass at the end of the breeding season of each individual is used. SeabORD assumes that there is a logistic relationship between mass at the end of the breeding season and the probability of adult survival during winter (Searle *et al.,* 2018). This requires two parameters, the 'baseline' survival and the slope associated with the impact of a change in adult mass upon the probability of survival. Both parameters are set by SeabORD.
- 23 The baseline survival is equal to the mean value of sites with observed data on annual adult survival and has been collated by the creators of SeabORD. Likewise, so is the shape of the logistic curve, which explains the relation between survival probability and body weight. Annual mortality is predicted by





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SeabORD and results are presented in [Table 6,](#page-14-3) [Table 10,](#page-21-2) [Table 14](#page-28-2) and [Table 18](#page-34-2) for the Project Alone Scenario an[d Table 8,](#page-18-1) [Table 12,](#page-25-1) [Table 16](#page-31-1) and [Table 20](#page-37-1) for the Cumulative Scenario in Sectio[n 3.](#page-14-0)

24 For species where less than 100% of the population were simulated, the number of mortalities outputted by SeabORD were scaled up to 100% using a scaling factor of 1/proportion of the population simulated. This scaling factor assumes that the number of mortalities has a linear relationship with the proportion of the population simulated.



### **3 Results**

**3.1 Kittiwake**

#### **3.1.1 Project Alone simulations**

**Table 6 Modelled impacts of the Project Alone scenario on adult kittiwake during 'poor', 'moderate' and 'good' environmental conditions. Scaled mortalities were calculated using a scaling factor of 1/0.3**

<span id="page-14-3"></span><span id="page-14-2"></span><span id="page-14-1"></span><span id="page-14-0"></span>







**Table 7 Kittiwake SeabORD outputs for the Project Alone scenario. Impacted adults refer to any adult that experienced distributional responses at least once during the simulation. Where breeding season is referenced, this applies only to the chick-rearing period** 

<span id="page-16-0"></span>



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#### **3.1.2 Cumulative simulations**

**Table 8 Modelled impacts of the Cumulative Scenario on adult kittiwake during 'poor', 'moderate' and 'good' environmental conditions. Scaled mortalities were calculated using a scaling factor of 1/0.3**

<span id="page-18-1"></span><span id="page-18-0"></span>



**Table 9 Kittiwake SeabORD outputs for the Project alone scenario. Impacted adults refer to any adult that experienced distributional responses at least once during the simulation. Where breeding season is referenced, this applies only to the chick-rearing period**

<span id="page-19-0"></span>







#### **3.2 Guillemot**

#### **3.2.1 Project Alone simulations**

**Table 10 Modelled impacts of the Project Alone scenario on adult guillemot during 'poor', 'moderate' and 'good' environmental conditions. Scaled mortalities were calculated using a scaling factor of 1/0.3**

<span id="page-21-2"></span><span id="page-21-1"></span><span id="page-21-0"></span>







**Table 11 Guillemot SeabORD outputs for the Project Alone Scenario. Impacted adults refer to any adult that experienced distributional responses at least once during the simulation. Where breeding season is referenced, this applies only to the chick-rearing period**

<span id="page-23-0"></span>







#### **3.2.2 Cumulative simulations**

**Table 12 Modelled impacts of the Cumulative Scenario on adult guillemot during 'poor', 'moderate' and 'good' environmental conditions. Scaled mortalities were calculated using a scaling factor of 1/0.3**

<span id="page-25-1"></span><span id="page-25-0"></span>



**Table 13 Guillemot SeabORD outputs for the Cumulative scenario. Impacted adults refer to any adult that experienced distributional responses at least once during the simulation. Where breeding season is referenced, this applies only to the chick-rearing period**

<span id="page-26-0"></span>







#### **3.3 Razorbill**

#### **3.3.1 Project Alone simulations**

**Table 14 Modelled impacts of the Project Alone Scenario on adult razorbill during 'poor', 'moderate' and 'good' environmental conditions. Scaled mortalities were calculated using a scaling factor of 1/0.3**

<span id="page-28-2"></span><span id="page-28-1"></span><span id="page-28-0"></span>



**Table 15 Razorbill SeabORD outputs for the Project Alone Scenario. Impacted adults refer to any adult that experienced distributional responses at least once during the simulation. Where breeding season is referenced, this applies only to the chick-rearing period**

<span id="page-29-0"></span>



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#### **3.3.2 Cumulative simulations**

**Table 16 Modelled impacts of the Cumulative Scenario on adult razorbill during 'poor', 'moderate' and 'good' environmental conditions. Scaled mortalities were calculated using a scaling factor of 1/0.3**

<span id="page-31-1"></span><span id="page-31-0"></span>



**Table 17 Razorbill SeabORD outputs for the Cumulative Scenario. Impacted adults refer to any adult that experienced distributional responses at least once during the simulation. Where breeding season is referenced, this applies only to the chick-rearing period**

<span id="page-32-0"></span>



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#### **3.4 Puffin**

#### **3.4.1 Project Alone simulations**

**Table 18 Modelled impacts of the Project Alone scenario on adult puffin during 'poor', 'moderate' and 'good' environmental conditions**

<span id="page-34-2"></span><span id="page-34-1"></span><span id="page-34-0"></span>



**Table 19 Puffin SeabORD outputs for the Project Alone Scenario. Impacted adults refer to any adult that experienced distributional responses at least once during the simulation. Where breeding season is referenced, this applies only to the chick-rearing period**

<span id="page-35-0"></span>







#### **3.4.2 Cumulative simulations**

**Table 20 Modelled impacts of the Cumulative Scenario on adult puffin during 'poor', 'moderate' and 'good' environmental conditions**

<span id="page-37-1"></span><span id="page-37-0"></span>



**Table 21 Puffin SeabORD outputs for the Cumulative Scenario. Impacted adults refer to any adult that experienced distributional responses at least once during the simulation. Where breeding season is referenced, this applies only to the chick-rearing period**

<span id="page-38-0"></span>



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