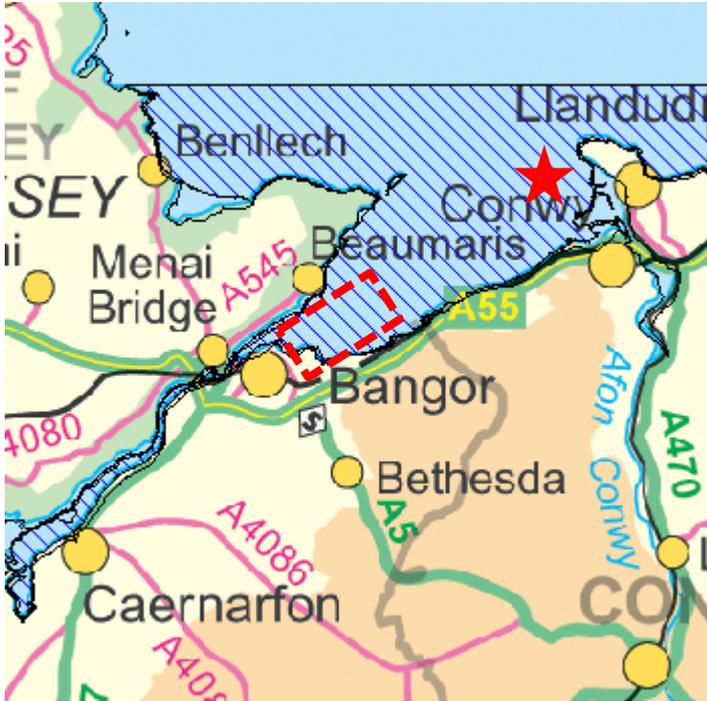


Marine Stewardship Council - Variation Request Form V1.2

Date submitted to MSC	05/10/2012
Conformity Assessment Body	MacAlister Elliott and Partners Ltd. (MEP)
Fishery Name/CoC Certificate Number	North Menai Strai Mussel Fishery (MEP-F-002 and MEP-F-010)
Lead Auditor/Programme Manager	Dr. Jo Gascoigne
Scheme requirement(s) to vary from	CR 27.4.3

Proposed variation
Addition of the Conwy Bay seed collection area to the existing, certified Unit of Certification without separate MSC assessment.

Rationale/Justification
<p>During the Year 2 Surveillance audit of this fishery it was established that in 2012, 270 t of seed was fished from an ephemeral seed bed in Conwy Bay – the first time for several years that seed has been taken from this area. This seed was fished by Deepdock Ltd. and has been relaid in a separate area pending analysis of the MSC status of this seed. Figure 1 shows the approximate areas concerned.</p> 
<p>Figure 1. Area of Menai Strait and Conwy Bay SAC (taken from NBN Gateway¹) with the approximate area of the mussel lays in the Strait (dashed rectangle) and the approximate site of seed harvest (red star).</p>

¹ See

<http://data.nbn.org.uk/siteInfo/siteSpeciesGroups.jsp?useIntersects=1&allIDs=1&engOrd=1&srcKey=UK0030202&srcDsKey=GA000327>

This fishery was originally assessed before explicit requirements for the assessment of 'catch and grow' enhanced bivalve fisheries were developed. Since these are now in place, however, the MEP audit team decided to consider Conwy Bay seed collection site within the framework of these new requirements (Annex CK of the Certification Requirements version 1.2). This identifies one of the critical questions for these fisheries as whether or not there is 'translocation' – i.e. movements of mussels outside the immediate vicinity of the area where they are ultimately harvested from. In the case of the seed collection site in Conwy Bay, the audit team concluded that this did not constitute translocation, for the following reasons:

- The seed collection site is physically close to the mussel lays, and within the boundaries of the geographical / oceanographic / ecological area of the Menai Strait, which is bounded to the northeast by the Great Orme (see Figure 1 and Figure 2 below).
- The seed collection site is within the Menai Strait / Conwy Bay SAC, which also includes the mussel lays (Figure 1).

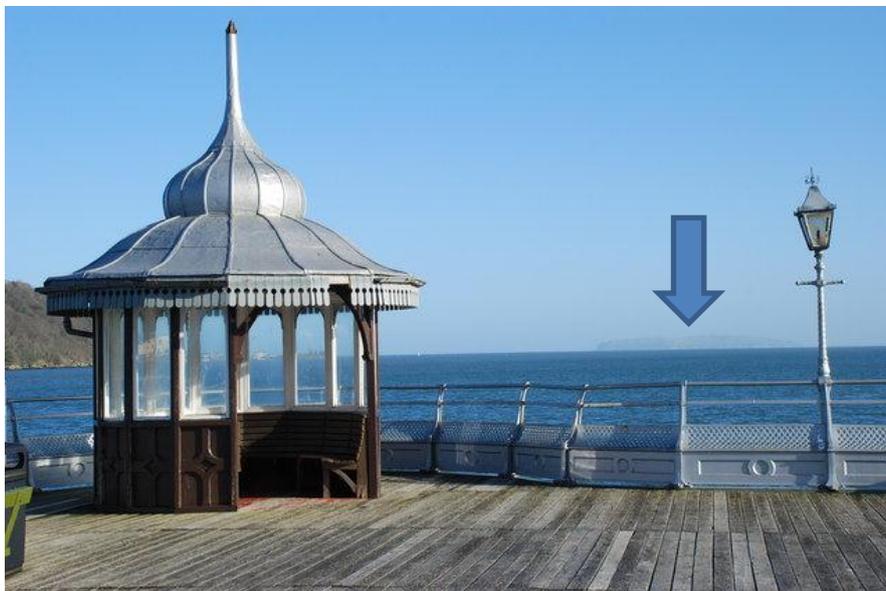


Figure 2. A view from Bangor pier northeast towards the Great Orme (shown with an arrow), across the area encompassing the mussel lays. The seed harvesting area is between the mussel lays and the Great Orme.

The audit team therefore concluded that taking mussels from this area does not constitute translocation. This means that according to Annex CK, an assessment of Principle 1 is not required. Having concluded that this seed site is i) within the same ecosystem as the mussel lays and ii) under the same conservation management system (the SAC and the wider fisheries management structure), the audit team concluded that collecting seed from this area is in fact identical, from the point of view the analysis for Principles 2 and 3, to the movement and harvesting of mussels within the Menai Strait itself. The audit team therefore proposes that this seed collection area could be added to the existing, certified UoC without further assessment.

Implications for assessment (required for fisheries assessment variations only)

If approved, the justification presented above will be included in the Year 2 Audit report and circulated to the fishery's stakeholders. Stakeholders will have a 30-day period to submit comments.

Have the stakeholders of this fishery assessment been informed of this request? (required for fisheries assessment variations only)

No, stakeholders will be informed if this request gets approved.

