

Offshore Renewable Protocol for Archaeological Discoveries



Operational Guide 2: Benthic Ecology Survey



Introduction

This Operational Guide is intended to help those involved in benthic ecology surveys to meet the requirements of The Crown Estate's Offshore Renewables Protocol for Archaeological Discoveries (ORPAD).

Benthic ecology surveys are routinely carried out to characterise the seafloor ecology of proposed Development Areas. Survey techniques such as benthic grab samples, trawls, diver surveys and seabed photography all have the potential to make archaeological discoveries.



What to do

It is unlikely that provision will have been made for archaeologists to review the findings of benthic surveys. Where no immediate provision for archaeological input is provided, the ORPAD will apply. This Operational Guide will help you to report finds and anomalies that you suspect may be of archaeological interest. This includes any discoveries made on a vessel or in the lab.

DOs

- ✓ Seek the advice of the Protocol team at Wessex Archaeology if you are unsure on your next steps – protocol@wessexarch.co.uk
- ✓ Record find/anomaly position by GPS and the measurement heading of vessel if appropriate
- ✓ If you are the Site Champion, report the discovery to your Nominated Contact immediately
- ✓ Make sure all details are recorded (exact location, date, time, etc.) using the Protocol's recording forms
- ✓ If you suspect a discovery is of 'high potential' (see criteria) stop work in the area where the find was discovered until archaeological advice is received via the Nominated Contact
- ✓ Keep a sample of peat or similar organic materials when found, and keep any archaeological artefacts found when processing these materials in a lab
- ✓ Keep finds protected in a suitable container in a cool, dark place
- ✓ If the item came from seawater, keep it immersed in seawater
- ✓ Label finds and handle them with care

DON'Ts

- ✗ DON'T wait to report the finds
- ✗ DON'T remove any concretion, sediment or dirt
- ✗ DON'T leave the finds where they could be damaged or deteriorate
- ✗ DON'T allow wet finds to dry out
- ✗ DON'T keep all organic material, a sample and its location is sufficient

Criteria for High Potential Finds – Nominated Contact to be informed immediately

- Single finds that are post-medieval or earlier in date (date to 1800 or earlier)
- Single finds that relate to military aircraft
- Multiple finds recovered from one location
- Indications of the presence of a shipwreck or other structural remains
- Peat or other fine-grained sediments that contain worked flint, charcoal or bone

Criteria for Low Potential Finds

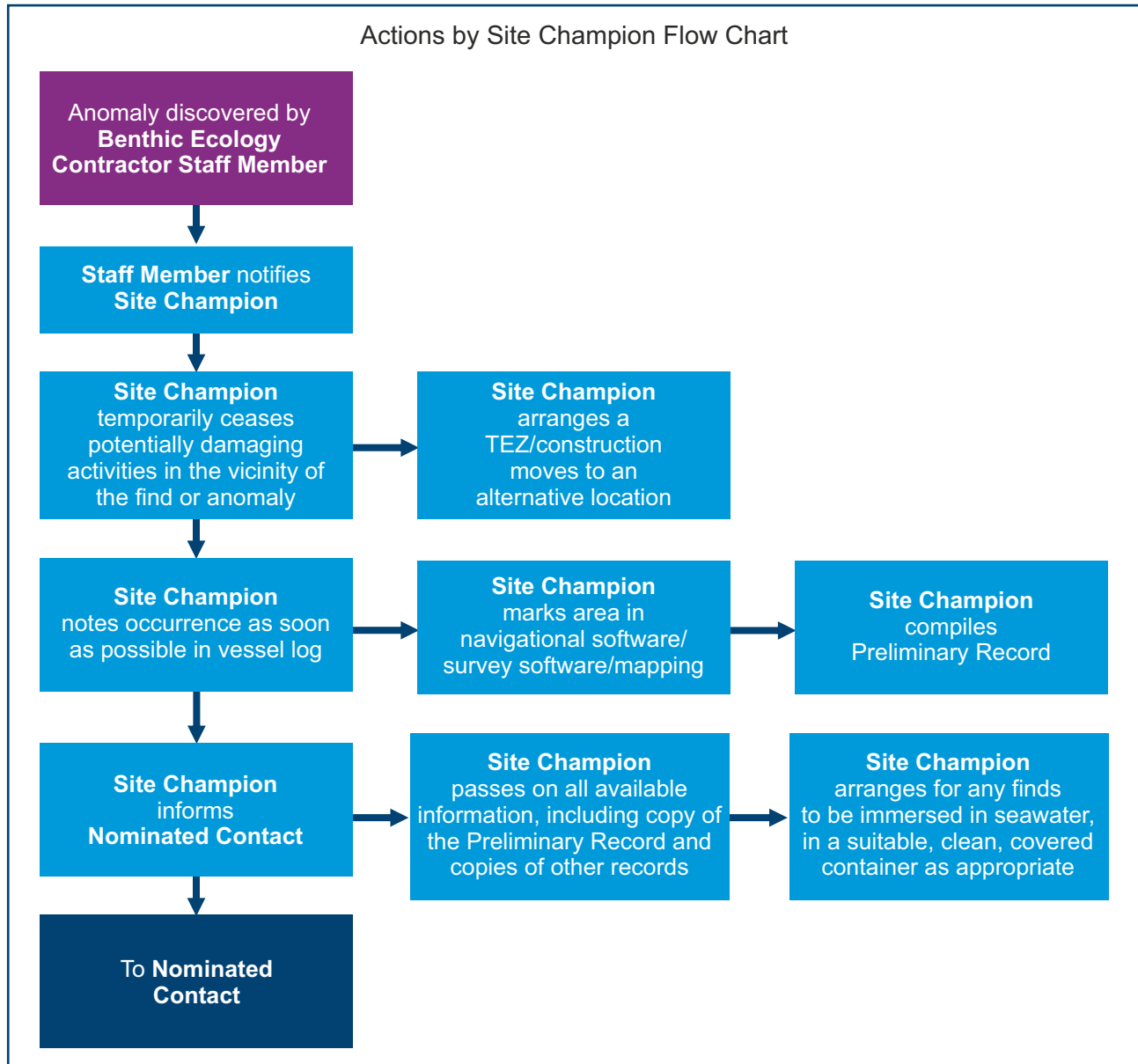
- Single, isolated finds that are not dateable or of modern (post-1800) date
- Peat deposits

Prepared by

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Guidelines for identifying finds of archaeological interest can be found in the *Protocol for Archaeological Discoveries: Offshore Renewables Projects* (The Crown Estate, 2014). The Preliminary Record form for reporting archaeological discoveries to the Nominated Contact can be found in the Protocol document and on the Protocol website:

www.wessexarch.co.uk/projects/marine/tcerenewables

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