

Wildlife Observations

Observations undertaken by Mike Cockram, Eday resident (pictured below).



Introduction

The potential for tidal stream devices to displace marine mammals and birds from their habitual waters is a subject of concern that requires a careful approach to management and mitigation. Therefore in conjunction with the Sea Mammal Research Unit (SMRU) at St Andrews, EMEC has developed and established a programme of wildlife observations at the test site from which we will be able to assess effects from devices being tested.

Data Collection

The test site area is regularly scanned by telescope for hour long periods from an elevated vantage point to the south of Eday. Animals spotted are identified to species level, along with their location on an imposed grid. Physical variables are also recorded and the annual schedule of observations totals just under 1,000 hours.

Data Analysis

SMRU have been commissioned to undertake expert statistical modeling of the data using various analytical techniques. An example output of the overall bird distribution can be seen in the diagram in the bottom right hand corner.

Results

The results to date have formed a baseline data set and shown seasonal peaks at the site in grey and harbour seal abundances corresponding with pupping seasons. The majority of cetacean sightings were of Harbour porpoises, with a diverse range of birds also observed.

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