

Cefas contract report MLA/2012/00454

Radiological Assessment of Dredging Application for Heysham Power Station, Lancashire (2013)

Cefas Environment Report RL 07/13

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Issue date: February 2013

RADIOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT OF DREDGING APPLICATION FOR HEYSHAM POWER STATION, LANCASHIRE (2013)

Summary

In 2013, EDF Energy Nuclear Generation Limited lodged a MCAA licensing application to carry out a dredging program involving the disposal at sea of 198,000 tonnes of material (sand and silt), over the licence lifetime, from the cooling water intake area of Heysham 1 and 2 Power Station in Lancashire.

In England, the MMO administers a range of statutory controls that apply to marine works on behalf of the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), this includes issuing licences under the Marine and Coastal Access Act (MCAA), 2009 (United Kingdom - Parliament, 2009) for the disposal of dredged material at sea. Licences for disposals made in Scottish waters and around the coast of Northern Ireland are the responsibility of the Scottish Government (Marine Scotland) and the Department of Environment (NIEA), respectively. As of 1 April 2010, licences for Welsh waters are the responsibility of the Welsh Government.

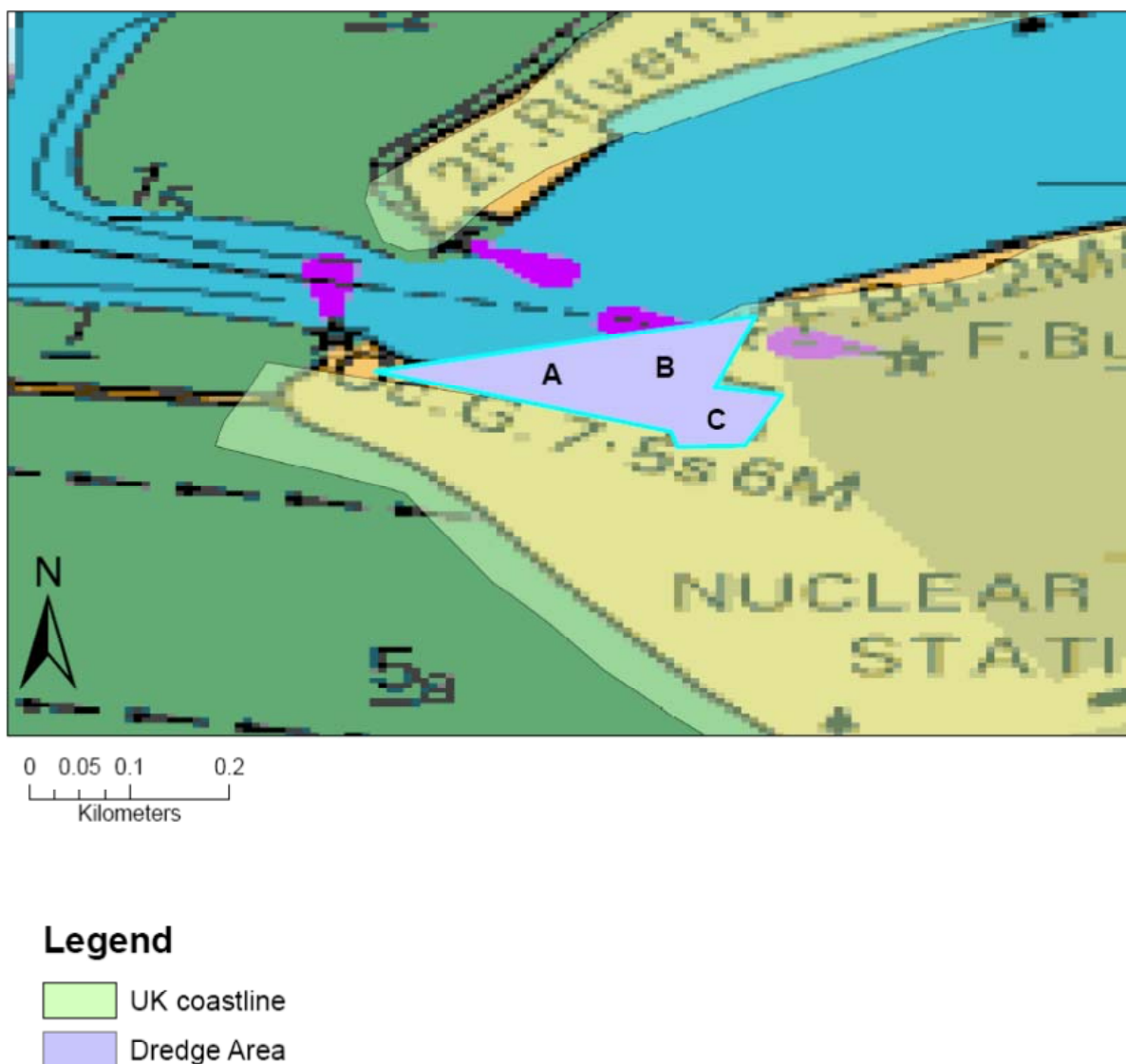
Using the conservative generic radiological assessment procedure developed by the IAEA, to convert radionuclide concentrations in dumped material into radiation doses due to dumping, the total derived total doses to individual members of the crew and public were 3.1 $\mu\text{Sv}/\text{year}$ and 0.9 $\mu\text{Sv}/\text{year}$, respectively. The total collective dose was 0.025 manSv/year . The values for individual members of the crew and public, and the collective dose, were within the *de minimis* criteria of 10 $\mu\text{Sv}/\text{year}$ (individual doses) and 1 manSv/year (collective dose), respectively.

Since the conservative generic radiological assessment procedure indicated that doses received were below recommended limits, a subsequent more detailed case specific assessment was not necessary. Therefore, from radiological considerations, there is no objection to this material being dredged and dumped.

Assessment details

In 2013, EDF Energy Nuclear Generation Limited lodged a MCAA licensing application to carry out a dredging program, involving the disposal at sea of ~ 76,154 m³ of silt and ~ 58,235 m³ of sand from the cooling water intake area of Heysham 1 and 2 Power Station in Lancashire. As part of the radiological assessment of the proposed operation, six sediment samples were taken from three locations each at surface and at approximately 1.0 m depth. Sampling locations for Sites A, B and C are given in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Location Site (Heysham Power Station)



Following freeze-drying and homogenisation, radionuclide assay at the Cefas Lowestoft Laboratory was achieved by γ counting samples on a high purity Ge detector. The results are summarised in Table 1.

Table 1. Radioactivity in sediment dredged from Heysham Power Station (Lancashire), January 2013

Sample Identification	Specific activity (Bq/kg, dry weight)					
	^{60}Co	^{137}Cs	^{226}Ra (via ^{214}Pb)	^{232}Th (via ^{228}Ac)	^{238}U (via ^{234}Th)	^{241}Am
Site A Surface	<0.28	35.4	15.9	13.8	16.3	47.6
Site B Surface	<0.31	37.8	15.7	15.3	25.0	48.91
Site C Surface	<0.30	42.0	14.3	13.8	17.7	44.3
Site A Sub-surface	<0.30	45.2	15.9	15.8	24.0	56.4
Site B Sub-surface	<0.32	51.8	15.7	15.7	31.5	68.7
Site C Sub-surface	<0.29	35.6	12.7	15.2	17.4	43.6
*Average	0.3	41	15	15	22	52

*Average determinations use < results as positively measured values to produce a conservative estimate

The specific activity of the artificial radionuclides (e.g. ^{137}Cs and ^{241}Am) in these samples was typical of muddy sediments along the Cumbrian coastline, being significantly enhanced above background levels outside the Irish Sea. The contamination is a legacy of large discharges from the Sellafield Limited reprocessing plant (formally British Nuclear Fuels) at Sellafield in the 1970s.

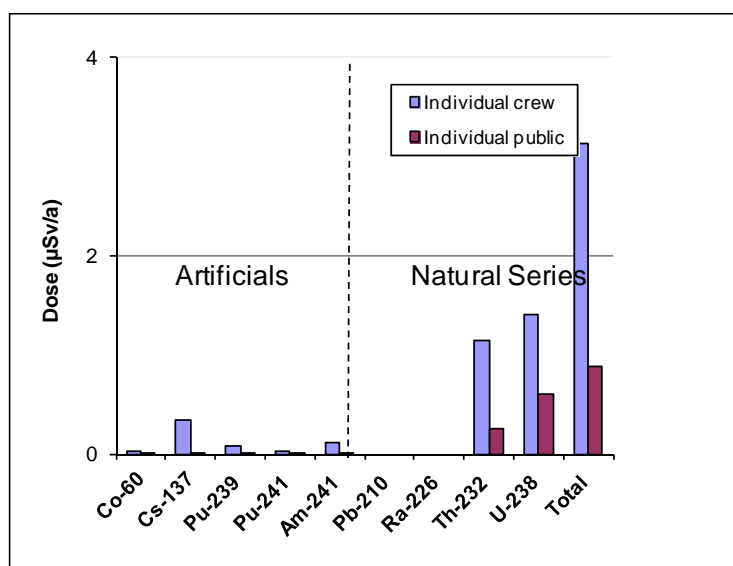
In addition to the nuclides detected by gamma spectrometry, sediments are also known to contain activities of Pu radionuclides. The ^{241}Am data were used to derive estimates for $^{239,240}\text{Pu}$ and ^{241}Pu , assuming their activity was proportional to the ratio in the time integrated Sellafield discharges. This approach is reasonable given that both radionuclides are highly particle-reactive; hence the fate following discharge is similar. The activity for ^{210}Pb was derived using data for ^{226}Ra and assuming secular equilibrium.

Under the London Convention, only materials with *de minimis* levels of radioactivity may be considered for dumping. Using the conservative generic radiological assessment procedure developed by the IAEA (IAEA, 2004), to convert radionuclide concentrations in dumped material into radiation doses due to dumping, the total derived total doses to individual members of the crew and public were 3.1 $\mu\text{Sv}/\text{year}$ and 0.9 $\mu\text{Sv}/\text{year}$, respectively. The total collective dose was 0.025 manSv/year. The values for individual members of the crew and public, and the collective dose, were within the *de minimis* criteria of 10 $\mu\text{Sv}/\text{year}$ (individual doses) and 1 manSv/year (collective dose), respectively.

The dose estimates for individual crew/public (by nuclide), derived using the generic IAEA model, are shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Assessment of dose to individual members of crew and the public arising from Heysham Power Station

Doses were derived using average activities listed in Table 1.



Since the conservative generic radiological assessment procedure indicated that doses received were well below recommended limits, a subsequent more detailed case specific assessment was not necessary. All the derived total dose values were less than the *de minimis* criteria of 10 $\mu\text{Sv}/\text{year}$ and 1 manSv/year for individual and collective dose, respectively.

Therefore, from radiological considerations, there is no objection to this material being dredged and dumped.

References

IAEA, 2004. Sediment distribution coefficients and concentration factors for biota in the marine environment. Tech. Rep. Ser. No. 422, IAEA, Vienna.

United Kingdom – Parliament, 2009. Marine and Coastal Access Act, 2009. HMSO, London.

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