



NPWS

An tSeirbhís Páircanna
Náisiúnta agus Fiadhúlra
National Parks and Wildlife
Service

**Derogation Number
DER-TURTLE-2025-01**

**EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES (BIRDS AND NATURAL HABITATS) REGULATIONS,
2011 (S.I. No 477 of 2011)**

DEROGATION

Granted under Regulation 54 of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011, hereinafter referred to as “the Habitats Regulations”.

The Minister for Housing, Local Government & Heritage, in exercise of the powers conferred on him by Regulation 54 of the Habitats Regulations hereby grants to **Thomas Doyle of University College Cork, School of Biological, Earth & Environmental Sciences, Enterprise Centre, Distillery Field, North Mall, County Cork, T23 XA50** a derogation. It is stated that this derogation is issued:

- A. For the purpose of research and education
- B. To allow, under strictly supervised conditions, on a selective basis and to a limited extent, the taking or keeping of certain specimens of the species
- C. As there is no satisfactory alternative, and the action authorised by this derogation will not be detrimental to the maintenance of the population of **loggerhead turtles** referred to below at a favourable conservation status in their natural range.

This derogation authorises the following:

1. Disturbance of loggerhead turtles (*Caretta caretta*) for the purposes of DNA sampling
2. Keeping of loggerhead turtle carcasses for the purposes of scientific research



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Terms and Conditions

1. This derogation is granted solely to allow the activities specified in the accompanying supporting documentation supplied by **Thomas Doyle**.
2. All activities authorised by this derogation, and all equipment used in connection herewith, shall be carried out, constructed and maintained (as the case may be) so as to avoid unnecessary injury or distress to **loggerhead turtles**. Anything done other than in accordance with the terms of this derogation may constitute an offence.
3. This derogation may be modified or revoked, for stated reasons, at any time.
4. The measures outlined in the accompanying application report, together with any changes or clarification agreed in correspondence between NPWS and the agent or applicant, are to be carried out. Strict adherence must be paid to all the proposed measures in the application.
5. The actions which this derogation authorise shall be completed between the **3rd September – 31st December 2025, inclusive**.
6. This derogation shall be produced for inspection on a request being made on that behalf by a member of An Garda Síochána or an authorised NPWS officer appointed under Regulation 4 of the Habitats Regulations.
7. The local NPWS **District Conservation Officer**, daniel.buckley@npws.gov.ie, should be contacted prior to the commencement of any activity.
8. On completion of the activities which this derogation authorises, all recordings of loggerhead turtles affected will be made using the standardised data form provided below and must be submitted to the NPWS **within four weeks of the expiry date** of this derogation.



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For the Minister for Housing, Local Government & Heritage

(an officer authorised by the Minister to sign on his behalf)

03 September 2025

Any query in relation to this derogation should be sent to reg54derogations@npws.gov.ie



Derogation Assessment

Name of Applicant: Thomas Doyle

Location/Name of Project: Dingle Oceanworld c/o UCC

Tick the following prohibition as chosen on the application:

(a) Deliberately capture or kill any specimen of the relevant species in the wild	<input type="checkbox"/>
(b) Deliberately disturb these species particularly during the period of breeding, rearing, hibernation and migration	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
(c) Deliberately take or destroy eggs of the relevant species in the wild	<input type="checkbox"/>
(d) Damage or destroy a breeding or resting place of such an animal, or	<input type="checkbox"/>
(e) Keep, transport, sell, exchange, offer for sale or offer for exchange any specimen of the relevant species taken in the wild, other than those taken legally as referred to in Article 12(2) of the Habitats Directive.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
(a) Deliberately pick, collect, cut, uproot or destroy any specimen of these species in the wild, or	<input type="checkbox"/>
(b) Keep, transport, sell, exchange, offer for sale or offer for exchange any specimen of these species taken in the wild, other than those taken legally as referred to in Article 13(1)(b) of the Habitats Directive.	<input type="checkbox"/>

Test 1: A reason(s) listed in Regulation 54 (a)-(e) applies to the proposed activity

i. Tick which reason the applicant claims should be applied to the derogation

(a) In the interests of protecting wild flora and fauna and conserving natural habitats,	<input type="checkbox"/>
(b) To prevent serious damage, in particular to crops, livestock, forests, fisheries and water and other types of property	<input type="checkbox"/>
(c) In the interests of public health and public safety, or for other imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of a social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment,	<input type="checkbox"/>
(d) For the purpose of research and education, of re-populating and re-introducing these species and for the breeding operations necessary for these purposes, including artificial propagation of plants, or	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
(e) To allow, under strictly supervised conditions, on a selective basis and to a limited extent, the taking or keeping of certain specimens of the species to the extent specified therein, which are referred to in the First Schedule.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

ii. Test 1: Conclusion

Please tick the following where it applies:

There is a valid reason(s) listed in Regulation 54 (a)-(e) which applies to the proposed activity:	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	No	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please outline your analysis below and state how the applicant has provided evidence to support your conclusion:

The application form and associated documentation provided by the applicant has been reviewed in full. The application relies on regulation 54(2) (d) '*For the purpose of research and education, of re-populating and re-introducing these species and for the breeding operations necessary for these purposes, including artificial propagation of plants*' and 54(2) (e) '*To allow, under strictly supervised conditions, on a selective basis and to a limited extent, the taking or keeping of certain specimens of the species to the extent specified therein, which are referred to in the First Schedule*' as the reason chosen for a derogation that they believe applies to the proposed activity.

As outlined in the supporting documentation under the purpose of research aspect provided by the applicant, the proposed research is to be conducted on a number of loggerhead sea turtles that live stranded in Irish waters during June/July 2025. The objective is to collect DNA (using non-invasive method of a buccal swab) from the stranded loggerhead turtles, which will assist in enabling the applicant to determine their origin. This research is of scientific interest to help understand where the turtles came from and to gain further knowledge about the migratory patterns of juvenile turtles to help protect them.

The applicant has also outlined under reason E, that collected dead hard-shell turtles have been frozen and stored for examination and future DNA analysis. This falls under the aspect of the keeping of certain specimens of the species to the extent specified therein aspect of Reason E.

The applicants have provided evidence as to the nature and scale of the research aspect reasoning and the proposed activity is necessary to achieve the overall objective. Based on the above this application has passed Test 1 and can now proceed to Test 2. |

Test 2: Absence of a satisfactory alternative

Please tick the following where it applies and add a comment below to support the recommendation:

The applicant has provided satisfactory evidence that alternative solutions have been considered and have given reasons why the proposed approach is the only satisfactory alternative:	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	No	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please outline your analysis below and state how the applicant has provided evidence to support your conclusion (If you wish to add additional conditions please complete pg. 6):

Where turtles turn up dead on our coasts samples of skin can be taken from these specimens but it is particularly important to sample animals that turn up here alive as their origins are of particular conservation significance.

Buccal swabs are the least invasive method of obtaining DNA samples from the turtles in question. As the animals are currently in captivity, taking buccal swabs can be carried out with minimal disturbance.

Upon completion of your assessment, please return this Recommendation to WLU to continue the application process.

Test 3: Impact of a derogation on conservation status of the species

Please tick the following where it applies and add a comment below to support the recommendation:

The derogation would NOT be detrimental to the maintenance of the populations of the species in question at a favourable conservation status in their natural range.	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	No	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please outline your analysis below and state how the applicant has provided evidence to support your conclusion. (If you wish to add additional conditions please complete pg. 6):

The animals in question are currently in captivity following a period of recuperation. Dr Doyle is an experienced marine biologist with particular expertise in marine turtles. He is experienced in handling turtles and taking biological samples from them. The DNA samples can be taken with minimal disturbance and with no impact on the conservation status of the species in question.

If the answer above is Yes then the derogation may be granted, providing Tests 1 and 2 have also been met.

Upon completion of your assessment, please return this Recommendation to WLU to continue the application process.

Derogation decision

The application for a derogation under Regulation 54 of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations, 2011 (S.I. 477 of 2011), as amended, has been assessed by officials in the Department and the following decision has been made:

Tick box where appropriate:

There is no satisfactory alternative ☒

and the derogation is not detrimental to the maintenance of the populations of the species to which the Habitats Directive relates at a favourable conservation status in their natural range. ☒

Therefore, a derogation may be granted to the applicant, since it is—

(a) in the interests of protecting wild fauna and flora and conserving natural habitats, ☐

(b) to prevent serious damage, in particular to crops, livestock, forests, fisheries and water and other types of property, ☐

(c) in the interests of public health and public safety, or for other imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of a social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment, ☐

(d) for the purpose of research and education, of repopulating and re-introducing these species and for the breeding operations necessary for these purposes, including the artificial propagation of plants, or ☒

(e) to allow, under strictly supervised conditions, on a selective basis and to a limited extent, the taking or keeping of certain specimens of the species to the extent specified therein, which are referred to in the First Schedule. ☒

OR This application has been refused as one or more of the conditions set out above have not been met ☐

The following conditions should be attached to the derogation:

1. ☐
2. ☐
3. ☐
4. ☐

[add additional conditions where required]

Signed:



Date: September 3, 2025

Position: Ecologist