

**Press Release – For immediate release 12/10/2017**

## **Government awards IFCA grant for Torbay MCZ otter trawling study**



D&S IFCA has received £40,000 from Defra and Natural England to undertake a study on how three months of otter trawling per year, in the Torbay Marine Conservation Zone, may impact its mud habitats.

“The research will determine whether methods of trawling for cuttlefish need to be modified to mitigate any potential impact on seabed mud habitat in Torbay and it is hoped that results will be transferable to other areas around the country where similar fishing is taking place” said Sarah Clark, Deputy Chief Officer (Environment).

The work will include evaluating the spread of the gear and the direct effect it has on the surface of the mud using acoustic and camera equipment attached to the trawls. Sediment samples will be analysed to see if animals living in the mud are impacted by the activity. During the survey different types of fishing gear will be used (regular and lighter trawls) to establish if any difference is determined from the type of equipment used.

D&S IFCA is working in partnership with Defra, Natural England, Ocean Ecology Consultants, Cefas, Eastern IFCA and the SeaFish Authority as well as a local fisherman to carry out the survey.

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**If you would like further information, images or an interview with a D&S IFCA Officer, please contact:**

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#### Editors Notes:

- D&S IFCA was established under the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 to lead, champion and manage a sustainable marine environment and inshore fisheries. The duties, responsibilities and powers for all IFCA's are clearly set out in this Act of Parliament.
- The D&S IFCA is the largest of ten separate IFCA districts and has two sea boundaries. The D&S IFCA District covers an area of 4522 Km<sup>2</sup>
- The D&S IFCA is funded through its constituent local authorities by an annual levy. That levy is supported by central Government to enable the Authority deliver on national management objectives. The local Authorities funding the IFCA are: Devon County Council, Plymouth City Council, Torbay Council; Somerset County Council, North Somerset Council, South Gloucestershire Council, Gloucestershire County Council and Bristol City Council.
- The D&S IFCA manages the exploitation of sea fisheries resources in its district and seeks to ensure that the conservation objectives of any Marine Conservation Areas in the district are furthered.
- D&S IFCA's vision is to: "lead, champion and manage a sustainable marine environment and inshore fisheries, by successfully securing the right balance between social, environmental and economic benefits to ensure healthy seas, sustainable fisheries and a viable industry".