



# Recreational Sea Angling Action Plan

## 2018-19

April 2018

### Cornwall Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority (IFCA) Vision

Cornwall IFCA will lead, champion and manage a sustainable marine environment and inshore fisheries. It will do this by successfully securing the right balance between social, environmental and economic benefits to ensure healthy seas, sustainable fisheries and a viable industry.

### 1. About this document

Following the Authority's adoption of the Recreational Sea Angling Strategy in 2016 it was resolved that Cornwall IFCA should, through a process of wide consultation, develop a Recreational Sea Angling Action Plan to sit underneath the Strategy.

The stated aims and outcomes of the strategy are;

Aims:

- I. To engage and work effectively with the recreational sea angling sector;
- II. To acknowledge and celebrate the economic and social benefits of recreational sea angling;
- III. To bring together existing information and data relating to the recreational sea angling sector in Cornwall as well as nationally; and
- IV. To establish a structure defining how Cornwall IFCA will work with the recreational sea angling sector over the current 4 year reporting period.

Outcomes:

- I. For recreational sea anglers to develop their understanding of and support for the work of Cornwall IFCA;
- II. To establish a framework where Cornwall IFCA can identify achievable benefits for recreational anglers;
- III. Identify future research activities; and

- IV. Gather data to better understand both the recreational sector, as well as other sectors which target similar species around Cornwall.

This Action Plan will support these aims and outcomes and will specifically fulfil the function, *To establish a framework where Cornwall IFCA can identify achievable benefits for recreational anglers.*

## **2. Main concerns of Recreational Sea Anglers**

In order to generate this action plan Cornwall IFCA consulted widely with Recreational Sea Anglers. This was conducted in two phases. The first, a public meeting where individuals' ideas and thoughts could be gathered would then lead to the generation of a web-based public survey, which ran between 30/6/17 and 31/8/17.

From the consultation it was clear that the main concerns to the recreational sector that are directly within the remit of Cornwall IFCA, are (in no particular order),

- Inshore netting, particularly of bass and mullet;
- A perceived lack of enforcement activities;
- A perception that Cornwall IFCA does not accept the value of the Recreational Sea Angling Sector to the UK economy;
- The development of new fisheries targeting live wrasse; and
- Review the minimum sizes for a variety of species.

## **3. Response to these concerns**

### **a) To continue to review and develop measures to manage netting inshore.**

Cornwall IFCA has recently made a byelaw to effectively ban all commercial netting with in Cornwall's rivers and estuaries. This byelaw has been made with the specific intention of rebalancing access to sea fishery resources from the netting sector towards hook and line fishermen, and will be of great benefit to recreational sea anglers. This will effectively also cover nearly all of the bass nursery areas (with the exception of two very small areas in the Camel and the Helford), it represents a significant change to the management of netting in popular areas for anglers.

The next byelaw being made will be for the protection of salmon and sea-trout. It will replace an existing byelaw limiting the headline depth of fixed nets around specific areas where salmon and sea-trout are known to gather. This new byelaw is a high priority and is well into the development phase. Cornwall IFC has already consulted widely including with the recreational sector to inform the drafting of this byelaw, and has made a commitment to publicise any formal consultation phase with the recreational sea anglers.

Further work looking at netting in Cornwall, particularly looking at technical measures to do with mesh size, and other spatial or temporal management will need to be informed by the progress of the negotiations with the European Union and other European non-member states. However Cornwall IFCA will commit to involving the recreational sector in future planning of management options at both informal and formal consultation stages.

### **b) Greater visibility of enforcement activities and a review of priority areas**

Cornwall IFCA works on the perspective that compliance is better than sanctions. We aim to work with stakeholders to improve their understanding of the relevant rules, codes of practice and byelaws that are in place. Alongside this work effective enforcement is essential to ensure that those not following the rules face appropriate consequences. Enforcement work, much like fishing, does not guarantee success every time.

Cornwall IFCA manages a wide range of activities, some of which are of great interest to recreational sea anglers, for example, netting in rivers, and some of much lower interest to anglers, such as management of the scallop dredging curfew hours. Cornwall IFCA manages its enforcement activities on a risk basis, where the different priorities are assessed annually, based on intelligence reports and our knowledge of activities and fishing patterns.

We have endeavoured to increase public awareness of our enforcement activities and successful prosecutions. We currently maintain, on our website, an up-to-date list of all enforcement activities which result in an investigation being launched or a sanction being issued. With the redesign of the website, this will be given greater prominence. Cornwall IFCA will continue to develop the use of social media to raise awareness of our enforcement work.

There were a number of calls for greater involvement of the recreational sea anglers as “eyes and ears”. Cornwall IFCA will look to develop links with the recreational sector to seek to improve contact with anglers, to better inform them as to our enforcement work and to inform those who wish to help as to how to best gather information which may be of interest to Cornwall IFCA.

**c) A perception that Cornwall IFCA does not accept the value of the Recreational Sea Angling Sector to the UK economy.**

It was somewhat disappointing that this issue was raised through this survey. Cornwall IFCA accepts and acknowledges the value of the recreational sea angling sector. The Recreational Sea Angling Strategy specifically states this and goes into some considerable detail as to the published sources where the economic value can be identified. In addition Cornwall IFCA has already developed legislation, in the River and Estuarine Fishing Nets Byelaw aimed at rebalancing fishing effort in favour of hook and line fisheries in part as a direct result of the acknowledgement of the social and financial value of recreational sea angling. However, Cornwall IFCA accepts that there is a continuing perception amongst Recreational Sea Anglers that the value of their sector is not recognised and will work to engage with the recreational sector.

One key area where this can be addressed is through formally involving the recreational sector in key public consultations, and vitally, to report back on those consultations showing how input from all sectors affected policy and byelaw development. In addition Cornwall IFCA will continue to work with other IFCAs, national bodies and interested parties to develop ways of demonstrating the economic value of recreational fishing in the development of management options.

**d) The development of new fisheries targeting live wrasse.**

Cornwall IFCA has committed considerable resources to developing a research programme to investigate, monitor and make recommendations for the management of this emerging fishery. A byelaw is currently in draft and the recreational sector have and will continue, to be involved in its development.

Wrasse are of particular importance to the recreational sea angling sector. As such they will be an important stakeholder group involved in the development of any management option, both at the informal and any formal consultation stage.

#### **e) Review the minimum sizes for a variety of species**

The UK is currently part of the European Union and as such falls under the Common Fisheries Policy and all associated fisheries legislation including the Landing Obligation (discard ban). Minimum size legislation is closely linked with the Landing Obligation and as such Cornwall IFCA is unable to effectively implement any minimum sizes for species which are subject to the Landings Obligation.

Until the Fisheries White Paper is published it is impossible to anticipate how existing EU and UK fisheries legislation will be incorporated into a new national framework. Until there is greater clarity it is inappropriate for Cornwall IFCA to be reviewing minimum size legislation at this time.

Cornwall IFCA will review its specified Fish Size Byelaw when it becomes clear what the implications of Brexit are on the Common Fisheries Policy and the future of inshore fisheries. The recreational sector will be informed and involved in any programme of review of minimum sizes.

#### **1. Review of this action plan.**

This action plan will be reviewed in April 2019, or if new information comes to light which may impact on the issues identified. The Recreational Sea Angling Strategy is scheduled to be reviewed in 2019.