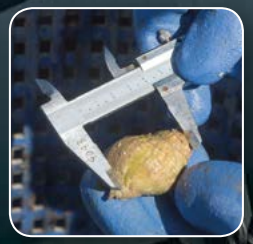
Sussex
Inshore Fisheries and
Conservation Authority

# Annual Report
2025-2026








## Further Copies

This document 'The Sussex IFCA Annual Report 2025-2026' is available in electronic form from Sussex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority

Submission and Publication date: November 2026

This document can be downloaded from the Sussex IFCA website at **www.sussex-ifca.gov.uk**

Alternatively, a hard copy can be viewed at the following location:

**Sussex IFCA,**
**12a Riverside Business Centre,**
**Brighton Road,**
**Shoreham-by-Sea**
**West Sussex, BN43 6RE**

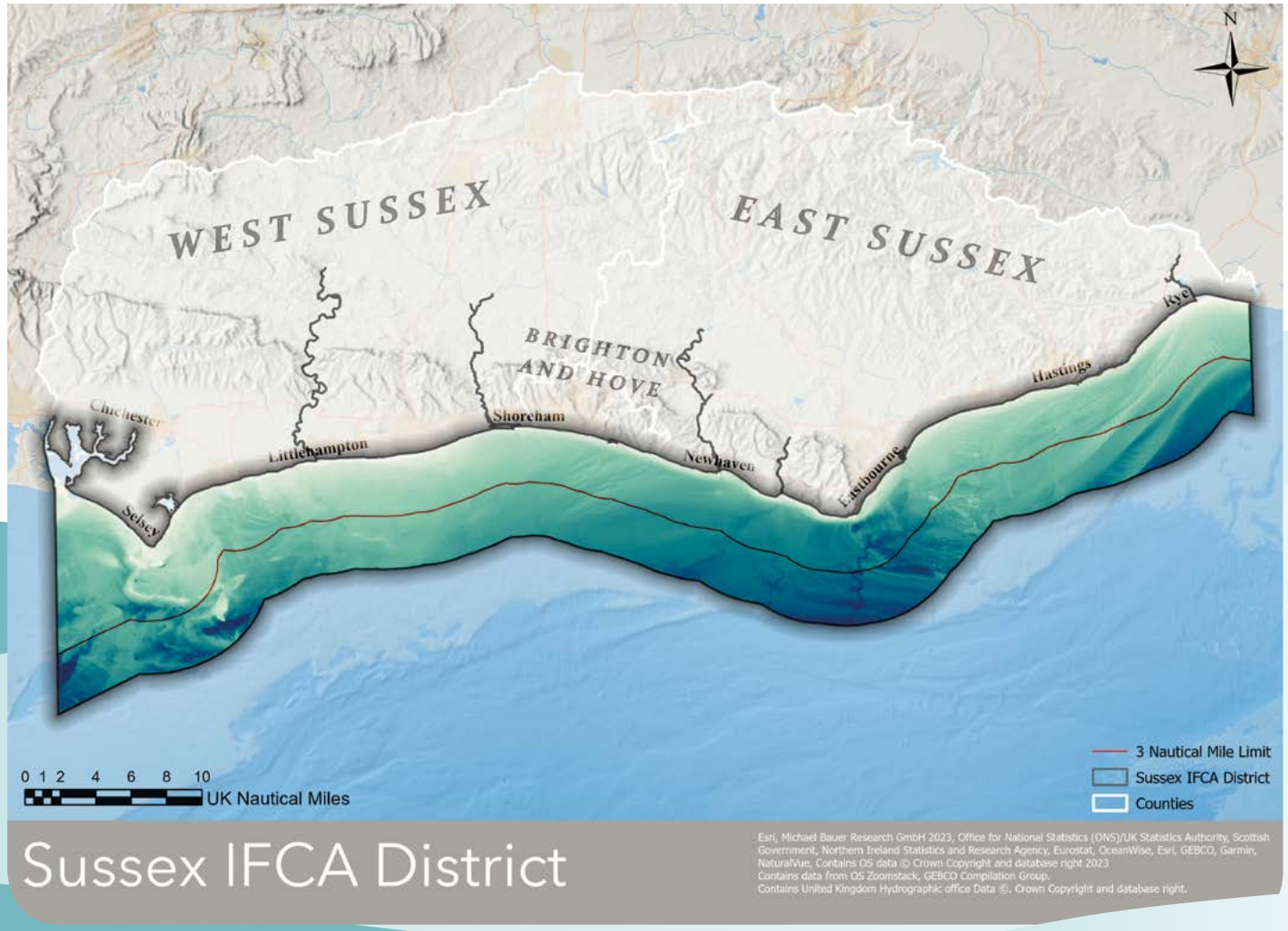
**Report photos:** © Sussex IFCA
**Report design:** spotondesign.com

# Sussex IFCA District

**The Sussex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Order 2010 defines the extent of the District:**

- The combined areas of the relevant councils (the "basic area" of the district); and
- The sea adjacent to the basic area of the district within the boundaries specified to a distance of 6 nautical miles from the 1983 baselines.

Sussex IFCA district covers an area of over 1738 km$^2$, and extends from Chichester Harbour in West Sussex, to the eastern extent of Rye Bay in East Sussex. The seaward boundary follows the 6 nautical mile limit measured from the 1983 baselines.




# Vision

**The Vision is a shared statement between all ten Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities in England.**

"Sussex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority will 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."

# Contents


**1** Purpose

**2** Foreword

**3** Year at a glance: 2025 - 2026

**4** Sussex IFCA: Delivery against IFCA Success Criteria (SC)

**5** Success Criterion 1

**7** Delivery of SC 1: Communications & Engagement

**10** Success Criterion 2

**12** Delivery of SC 2: Compliance & Enforcement

**16** Success Criterion 3

**18** Delivery of SC 3: Management Measures

**23** Success Criterion 4

**25** Delivery of SC 4: Governance & Training

**28** Success Criterion 5

**29** Delivery of Success Criterion 5: Evidence & Science

**30** Financial Summary

**32** Resources

**34** Employees & Organisational Structure

**37** Governance

**38** Committee Member's Attendance

**39** Risk Management Strategy

**41** Service Plan & Performance Standards

**42** Access to Information

**43** Abbreviations & Acronyms

**44** Glossary

**48** Contact




# Purpose

The Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 (MaCAA) was a landmark step by government to establish a holistic marine legislation framework capable of delivering modern management of United Kingdom seas. As well as establishing new marine management bodies, including the Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities and the Marine Management Organisation, it provided legislation to create a network of Marine Conservation Zones, the first sites being designated in 2013. The legislation is central to the commitment to the Government's vision of clean, healthy, safe, productive and biologically diverse oceans and seas, as defined the UK Marine Policy Statement.

Under sections 153 and 154 of MaCAA, the Sussex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority (Sussex IFCA) has clearly defined duties to manage sustainable fisheries and protect the marine environment within the coastal waters off Sussex.

## Duties:

1) Sussex IFCA must manage the exploitation of sea fisheries resources in its district, in doing so it must:

   a) seek to ensure that the exploitation of sea fisheries resources is carried out in a sustainable way.

   b) seek to balance the social and economic benefits of exploiting the sea fisheries resources of the district with the need to protect the marine environment from, or promote its recovery from, the effects of such exploitation.

   c) take any other steps which in the authority's opinion are necessary or expedient for the purpose of making a contribution to the achievement of sustainable development.

   d) seek to balance the different needs of persons engaged in the exploitation of sea fisheries resources in the district.

2) Sussex IFCA must also seek to ensure that the conservation objectives of any MCZ in the district are furthered.

Section 178 of MaCAA requires each IFCA to report on its activities in the previous financial year as soon as is reasonably practicable after its end. The report may be used by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) to measure the performance of the Authority, its accountability and value for money. This annual report for the Authority provides a detailed account of the year's work, against the previously published annual plan, for April 2025 to March 2026. The Authority continues to work towards the Government's Marine Policy Statement and defined High Level Marine Objectives:

## High Level Marine Objectives:

- Achieving a sustainable marine economy
- Ensuring a strong, healthy and just society
- Living within environmental limits
- Promoting good governance
- Using sound science, responsibly



# Foreword

Over the last year, the Authority has built on substantial progress previously made by maintaining a strong focus on sustainable fisheries management, marine environmental protection, compliance and enforcement, and developing the evidence base required for informed decision making. We remain committed to balancing environmental, social and economic considerations through a collaborative approach that supports healthy marine ecosystems and coastal communities.

A significant milestone was the Secretary of State's confirmation of the Marine Protected Areas Byelaw 2023, incorporating Beachy Head East Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ) Schedule, in January 2026. Years of evidence gathering, stakeholder engagement, impact assessment and regulatory development culminated in measures protecting 164km² of the MCZ from the impacts of bottom-towed fishing gear. This contributes to the Government's commitment to protect 30% of the marine environment by 2030 and marks a major achievement for the Authority, its partners, and all those who contributed to the development of these measures. All Marine Protected Areas within the Sussex District now have appropriate fisheries management in place, supporting their distinct conservation objectives.

The Authority strengthened its commitment to evidence-led fisheries management this year. In-house monitoring programmes expanded, including the use of Baited Remote Underwater Video Stations, alongside drone surveys, towed video surveys, acoustic telemetry work, small fish surveys and byelaw monitoring programmes. These activities provide robust scientific evidence to assess management effectiveness, monitor environmental change and keep decisions grounded in sound data.

A key theme has been Sussex IFCA's continued movement towards a more collaborative and co-management focused approach to fisheries management. This is evident in the review of the Shellfish Permit Byelaw, which commenced during 2025-2026. Extensive engagement with permit holders across the district provided valuable insights into current management arrangements and challenges facing Sussex's inshore fleet. Combining stakeholder knowledge with scientific evidence and policy objectives, the review aims to keep management effective, proportionate and responsive to the needs of the fishery.

Our Compliance and Enforcement Team maintained a strong operational presence across the district despite challenges associated with vessel maintenance and introduction of new assets. Through sea patrols, shore patrols, drone operations, inspections and intelligence-led enforcement activity, officers worked closely with fishers and partner agencies to encourage compliance. This reflects Sussex IFCA's commitment to education and engagement alongside proportionate enforcement, helping maintain high compliance across the district.

Communication and stakeholder engagement remained central to our work. Through consultations, project partnerships, digital communications, harbour visits and engagement with fishing communities, we recognise that effective management depends upon constructive dialogue and good relationships. Recent byelaw implementation, Fisheries Management Plan delivery and the commencement of byelaw reviews have all benefited from stakeholders contributing their time, expertise and local knowledge.

The Authority's achievements rely upon the dedication and professionalism of our staff, Members and partner organisations, whom I thank for their hard work and commitment throughout the year. I also recognise the invaluable contributions of Defra, the Marine Management Organisation, Environment Agency, Natural England, Cefas, Sussex Wildlife Trust, academic partners, fishing communities and the many organisations supporting the Authority's work across the district.

Looking ahead, Sussex IFCA remains focused on delivering sustainable fisheries management in an increasingly complex operating environment. Pressures on the marine environment continue to evolve alongside changing expectations for marine resource use and environmental protection. Furthermore, the programme of local government reorganisation across Sussex may create uncertainty for local public bodies, including how Sussex IFCA is funded and governed. While outcomes remain unclear, the Authority will continue to engage constructively with partners throughout this period of change to ensure its statutory responsibilities continue to be delivered effectively.



**Robert Pearson** M.Sc. MIFM
Chief Fisheries and Conservation Officer

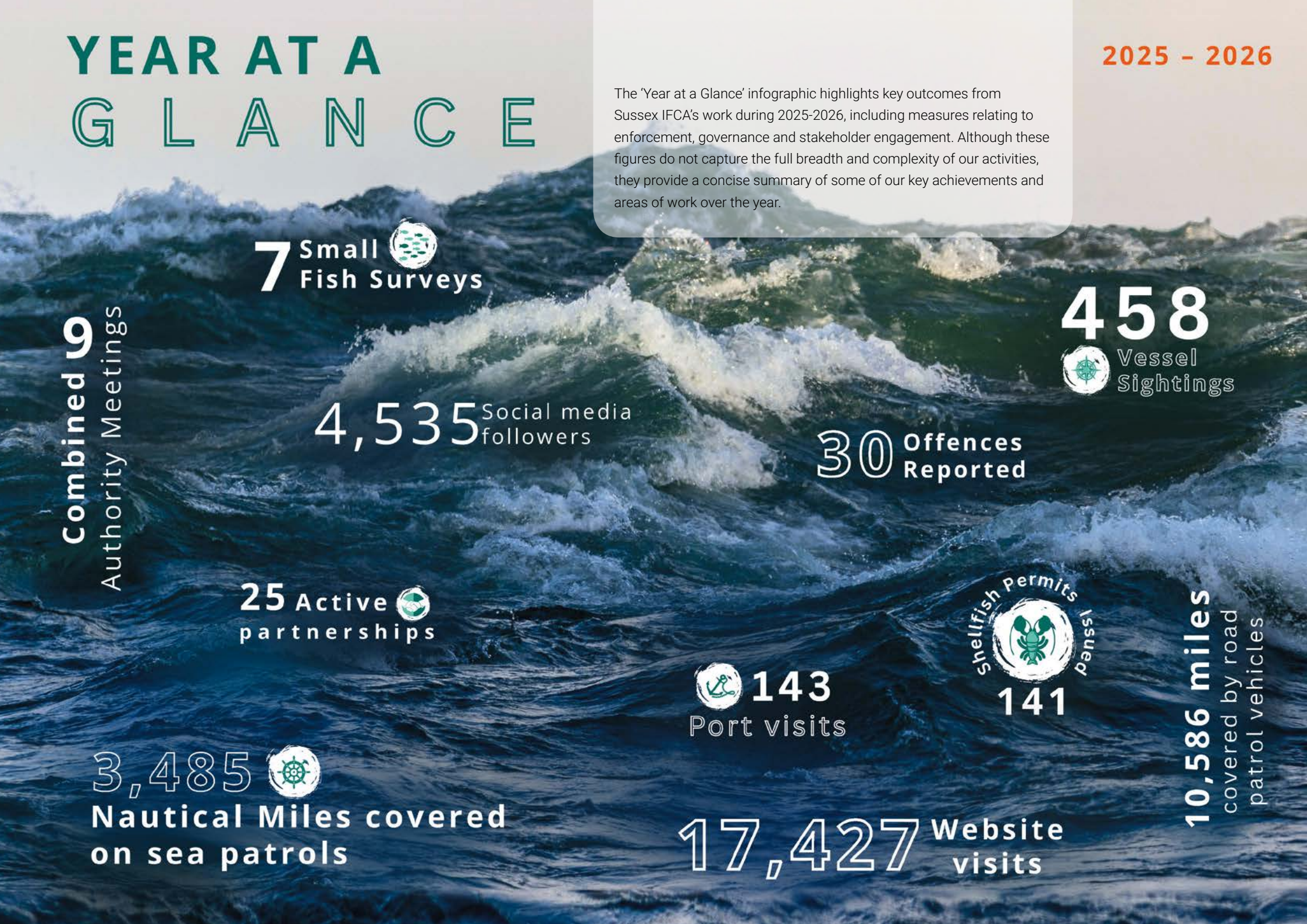


**Professor Peter Jones**
Chair

# YEAR AT A GLANCE

2025 – 2026

The 'Year at a Glance' infographic highlights key outcomes from Sussex IFCA's work during 2025-2026, including measures relating to enforcement, governance and stakeholder engagement. Although these figures do not capture the full breadth and complexity of our activities, they provide a concise summary of some of our key achievements and areas of work over the year.



# Sussex IFCA: Delivery against IFCA Success Criteria

The Authority has a statutory responsibility to report against five, Defra set high-level objectives and associated, nationally agreed success criteria. These were derived to ensure the management of inshore fisheries supports the objectives of the UK Marine Policy Statement and 25-year Environment Plan.

## High Level Objective

- Achieving a sustainable marine economy
- Ensuring a strong, healthy and just society
- Living within environmental limits
- Promoting good governance
- Using sound science, responsibly

## Success Criteria

- IFCAs are recognised and heard, whilst working in partnership and engaging with stakeholders
- IFCAs implement a fair, effective and proportionate enforcement regime
- IFCAs use evidence based and appropriate measures to manage the sustainable exploitation of sea fisheries resources and deliver marine environmental protection within their Districts
- IFCAs have appropriate governance in place and staff are trained and professional
- IFCAs make the best use of evidence to deliver their objectives

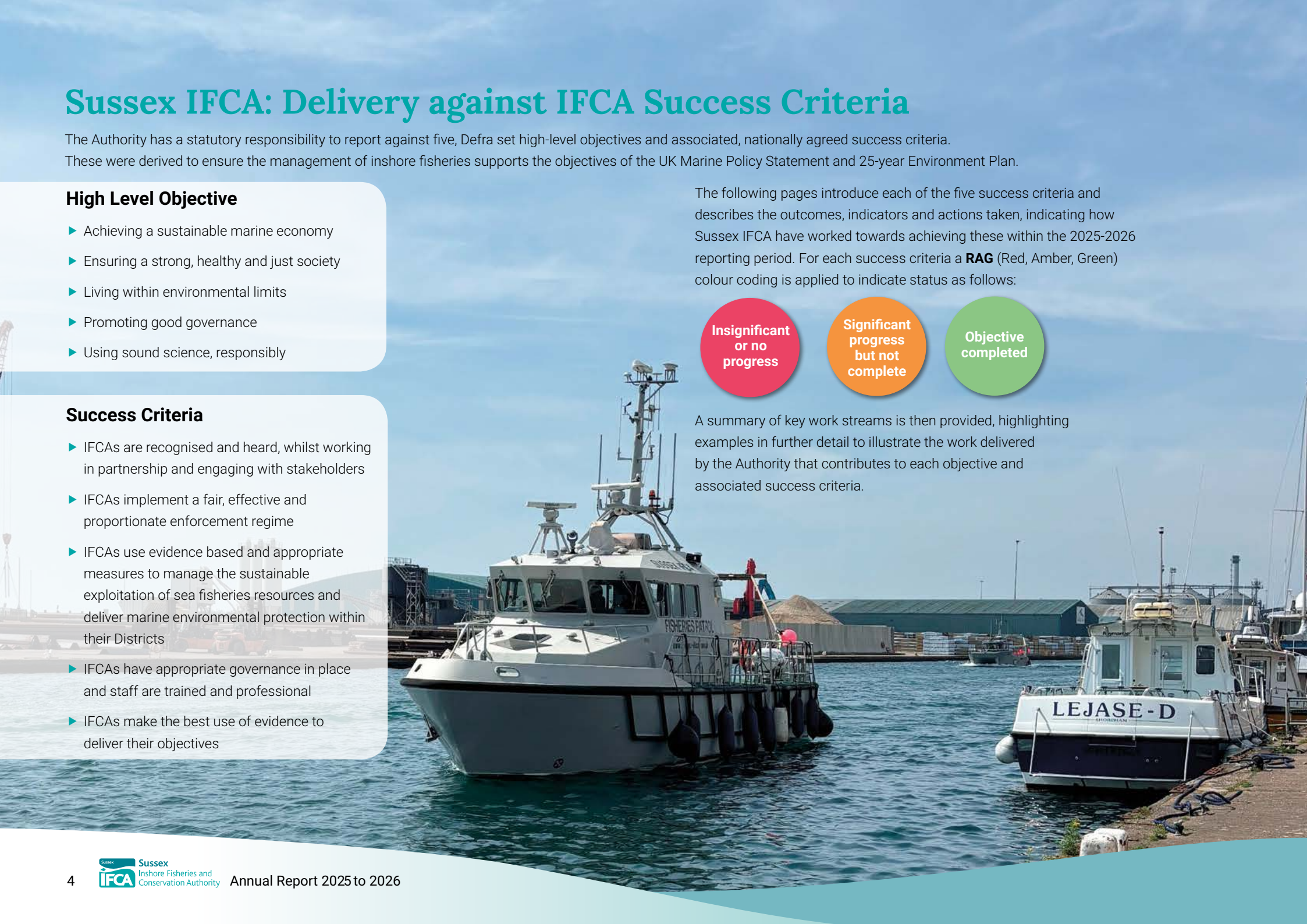
The following pages introduce each of the five success criteria and describes the outcomes, indicators and actions taken, indicating how Sussex IFCA have worked towards achieving these within the 2025-2026 reporting period. For each success criteria a **RAG** (Red, Amber, Green) colour coding is applied to indicate status as follows:

**Insignificant or no progress**

**Significant progress but not complete**

**Objective completed**

A summary of key work streams is then provided, highlighting examples in further detail to illustrate the work delivered by the Authority that contributes to each objective and associated success criteria.



# Success Criterion 1 Communications & Engagement

## IFCAs are recognised and heard, balancing the economic needs of the fishery whilst working in partnership and engaging with stakeholders

**Definition:** IFCAs will be visible, respected and trusted regulator within coastal communities and will maintain and deliver a strategy to communicate their vision and duties effectively. IFCAs will engage with policy makers, industry, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), recreational and commercial users and other regulators. They will work jointly and collaboratively with partner organisations across boundaries; will participate and contribute to the development and implementation of regional and national marine policy, including the marine planning regime; will take long-term strategic decisions and manage risks effectively. IFCAs may maintain a national body to co-ordinate the activities of authorities that are party to arrangements.

| OUTCOMES | INDICATOR | ACTIONS | RAG STATUS |
|---|---|---|---|
| • The IFCA will maintain and implement an effective communication strategy.<br>• The IFCA will maintain its website, ensuring public access to current fisheries and conservation information for the District, including management requirements and byelaws. Non-reserved IFCA Committee papers will be published.<br>• The IFCA will contribute to co-ordinated activity at a national level.<br>• The IFCA and its principal partners will have a clear understanding of roles and responsibilities. Memoranda of Understanding with MMO, Natural England, Environment Agency and Cefas will be maintained. Opportunities for greater efficiencies, effective joint working and collaboration will be explored and implemented when feasible. | **SC1A:** The IFCA will maintain a database of stakeholder contacts that will have been reviewed and updated by 31 March each year. | ▸ Create a database of stakeholders in the commercial fisheries, recreational sea angling, NGO and public sectors.<br>▸ Maintain a database of permit holders.<br>▸ Maintain list up to date and review data quality annually before 31 March.<br>▸ Data to be held with consideration to GDPR and used only as appropriate. | |
| | **SC1B:** The IFCA will have completed a review of its communication strategy and implementation plan by 31 March each year. | ▸ Continuously develop mechanisms and opportunities for engaging stakeholders and educating communities about sustainable management of the marine environment.<br>▸ Adopt and adapt to new digital communication channels, including maintaining an online digital presence.<br>▸ Development and displaying communication material.<br>▸ Publish a policy for information requests under the Freedom of Information Act, Environmental Information Regulations and Subject Access Requests.<br>▸ Log enquires and responses.<br>▸ Ensure enquiry responses meet the published Service Plan & Performance Standards, including handling of formal complaints.<br>▸ Maintain use of brand in uniform and communication materials.<br>▸ Engage with community stakeholders in media and meetings to inform and consult with interested parties.<br>▸ Ensure accessibility of communications materials.<br>▸ Review plan by 31 March. | |



## **Success Criterion 1** continued:

| OUTCOMES | INDICATOR | ACTIONS | RAG STATUS |
|---|---|---|---|
| • The IFCA will maintain and implement an effective communication strategy.<br>• The IFCA will maintain its website, ensuring public access to current fisheries and conservation information for the District, including management requirements and byelaws. Non-reserved IFCA Committee papers will be published.<br>• The IFCA will contribute to co-ordinated activity at a national level.<br>• The IFCA and its principal partners will have a clear understanding of roles and responsibilities. Memoranda of Understanding with MMO, Natural England, Environment Agency and Cefas will be maintained. Opportunities for greater efficiencies, effective joint working and collaboration will be explored and implemented when feasible. | **SC1C:** The IFCA will have reviewed its website by the last working day of each month. | ▸ Review website by the end of each month and update as required.<br>▸ Ensure published information is accurate and up to date, with particular reference to regulations, changes in regulations and associated guidance. | |
| | **SC1D:** The IFCA will have reviewed its website and ensured it meets the objectives of its communication strategy, by 31 March each year. | ▸ Review website in the context of the communication strategy by the end of the year. | |
| | **SC1E:** The IFCA will have reviewed all of its Memoranda of Understanding by 31 March each year. There will be a clear plan in place to update MoUs where necessary, to an agreed timescale. | ▸ Review MoU and partnership agreements by 31 March.<br>▸ Implement agreements with actions and meetings. | |
| | **SC1F:** By 31 March each year, the IFCA will have participated appropriately, proportionately and at the right level of delegation, in regional and national fisheries and conservation activity identified in the annual plan. | ▸ Actively participate in external meetings, group and partnerships. This participation will influence decision makers with regard to prioritising sustainable fisheries and protection of the marine environment.<br>▸ Provide evidence-based advice to decision makers on blue growth agenda, inshore fisheries, marine recreation, sustainable tourism and aquaculture.<br>▸ Actively support the Chief Officers Group and the association of IFCAs.<br>▸ Provided timely responses to consultations on significant plans and licences.<br>▸ Implement the Authority Service Plan in respect to defined objectives and targets. | |

# Delivery of Success Criterion 1: Communications & Engagement

Communicating fisheries management issues can be challenging, particularly when engaging with the wide range of people and organisations that use and rely on Sussex's inshore waters. Throughout the year, Sussex IFCA maintained regular communication with commercial and recreational fishers, coastal communities, partner organisations, conservation groups, businesses, local authorities and other regulators, helping to ensure those with an interest in the district remained informed about fisheries management, consultations, projects and wider Authority activities.

## Keeping Stakeholders Informed

The Sussex IFCA website (***www.sussex-ifca.gov.uk***) remains the main source of information on fisheries management, local byelaws, permits, consultations, conservation projects and committee business. During the year, the website received over 17,000 visits and content was reviewed regularly to ensure information remained accurate and up to date.

Social media remains an important way of sharing information with a wide audience. Across Facebook, X, Instagram, BlueSky and LinkedIn, Sussex IFCA continued to grow its online reach during the year, maintaining a combined following of more than 4,500 people. These platforms were used to publicise consultations, explain fisheries regulations, share research and project updates, advertise job opportunities and highlight partnership work taking place across the district. During the year, Sussex IFCA's Facebook and Instagram content generated more than 205,900 views. Sussex IFCA also joined BlueSky and produced a series of YouTube tutorials to help users navigate the permit database.

Sussex IFCA also produced a series of vessel leaflets for FPV's *Watchful*, *Merlin* and *Osprey*. The leaflets highlight the different roles each vessel plays in supporting compliance, fisheries management, research and marine conservation work across the district.

The permit database (***https://permits.sussex-ifca.gov.uk***) continues to provide permit holders with access to their permit information and catch return records, while also allowing applications, renewals and payments to be completed online. The system was expanded during the reporting period, to support permits issued under the Hand Gathering (Restrictions and Permitting) Byelaw 2021.

Sussex IFCA also continued to develop and maintain its Interactive Map platform, providing access to information such as district boundaries, habitat data, ecosystem services and fishing activity. The platform helps improve understanding of fisheries and marine management across the district.

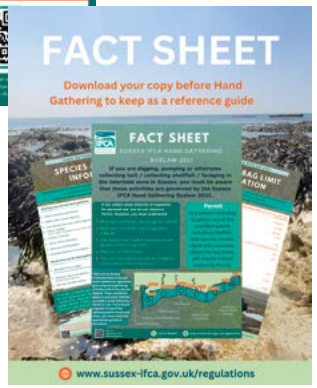
Sussex IFCA also launched a dedicated Report Illegal Fishing webpage (***www.sussex-ifca.gov.uk/report-illegal-fishing***), providing a clear route for fishers, stakeholders and members of the public to report suspected illegal fishing activity. The page explains how information can be submitted and what details help officers investigate reports.

## Introducing the Hand Gathering (Restrictions and Permitting) Byelaw 2021

A significant communications project during the year was the introduction of the Sussex IFCA Hand Gathering (Restrictions and Permitting) Byelaw 2021.

To help ensure those affected by the byelaw, understood the new requirements, Sussex IFCA produced a range of supporting materials including guidance documents, posters, fact sheets and frequently asked questions. In addition, signage outlining




hand gathering requirements was installed in known hand gathering hot spots. Information was shared through website, social media and stakeholder mailing lists, while notices were also placed in the Sea Angler magazine. Officers visited bait and tackle shops across the district to distribute information, answer questions and discuss the byelaw directly with recreational fishers and hand gatherers.

This combination of digital communication and face-to-face engagement helped raise awareness of the new byelaw across the district.

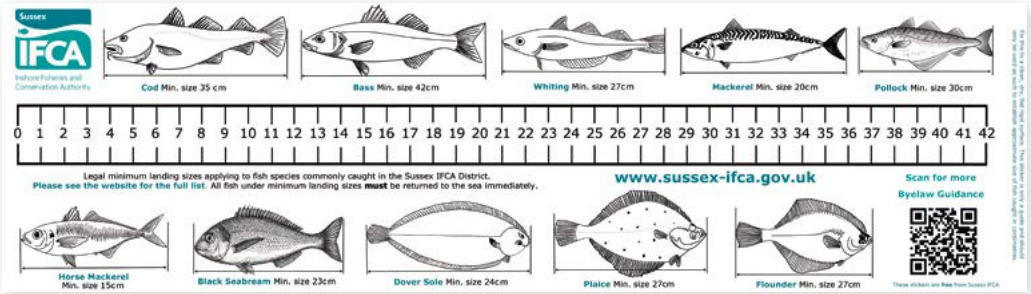
## **Delivery of Success Criterion 1** continued:

### Other Communication Activities

Communication activity during the year also included publication of the Authority's Annual Report 2024-2025, recruitment campaigns for Authority Members, a Senior Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Officer (Skipper), three Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Officer (IFCO) posts, one IFCO [Enhanced] post and marking the fifth anniversary of the Nearshore Trawling Byelaw 2019. This included coverage on BBC Southeast Today, helping mark the milestone.

Sussex IFCA also continued to promote the Minimum Size (Fish, Crustacea and Mollusc) Byelaw 2021. More than 5,000 minimum size measuring stickers have now been distributed across the district, providing both recreational and commercial fishers with a practical reference tool to help identify legal minimum sizes. Towards the end of the reporting period, officers also distributed lobster gauges to commercial shellfish fishers to assist with identifying the legal minimum landing size.






### Engagement and Partnership Working

While digital communication is increasingly important, many of the most valuable conversations still take place in harbours, on beaches, quaysides and during patrol activity. Officers and staff regularly engaged with fishers, permit holders, partner organisations, community groups and members of the public through meetings, consultations, events, project work and day-to-day operational activity.

Face-to-face and phone call interactions provide opportunities to explain management measures, answer questions, hear local concerns and gather local knowledge that can help inform future management decisions.

Further examples of stakeholder engagement activities delivered during the year are highlighted under SC4.

Sussex IFCA maintains Memoranda of Understanding and working relationships with a number of organisations, including the Marine Management Organisation (MMO), Environment Agency (EA), Natural England (NE), Cefas, Sussex Wildlife Trust (SWT) and the University of Brighton. These relationships support information sharing, joint projects and coordinated working across a range of fisheries and marine conservation matters.

Sussex IFCA also participates in a number of national IFCA groups and forums, including the Association of IFCAs (AIFCA), Chief Officers Group (COG), Technical Advisory Group (TAG) and National Inshore Marine Enforcement Group (NIMEG). Through these groups, Sussex IFCA shares knowledge and experience, contributes local expertise and remains involved in discussions affecting fisheries management at both regional and national levels.

At a regional level, Sussex IFCA continued to take part in a range of marine and coastal partnerships, helping ensure fisheries management is considered alongside wider environmental, social and economic interests. These partnerships help avoid duplication of effort, make best use of available resources and support a more coordinated approach to managing the Sussex coast.


SOLENT FORUM
Est. 1992
UNIVERSITY OF PLYMOUTH
Brighton & Hove City Council
west sussex county council
NATURAL ENGLAND
University of Brighton
US
UNIVERSITY OF SUSSEX
Environment Agency
Sussex Wildlife Trust
Channel Coastal Observatory
WWG
East Sussex County Council
Pevensey Bay to Eastbourne Coastal Management Scheme
ANGLING TRUST
Sussex Bay
UNIVERSITY OF PORTSMOUTH
MEDIN
CHICHESTER HARBOUR CONSERVANCY
SOLENT SEASCAPE PROJECT
Sussex Kelp Recovery Project
CHASM
Crustaceans Habitat and Sediment Movement
Newcastle University
BLUE MARINE FOUNDATION
SUSSEX MARINE AND COASTAL FORUM
Championing healthy and thriving marine and coastal environments in Sussex
Marine Management Organisation
sea-changers
oceanographic

# Success Criterion 2 Compliance & Enforcement

## IFCAs implement a fair, effective and proportionate enforcement regime

**Definition:** The IFCA enforcement regime is risk-based, makes appropriate use of intelligence, meets legislative standards and complies with the Regulators Code. It should make effective use of the resources available to regulators; complement and align, if possible, with the regimes in adjacent IFC Districts and management by other organisations including the MMO and Environment Agency. Consistency and fairness is important. Regulatory compliance is promoted. Enforcement action is carried out by trained, professional officers working to clear standards of conduct.

| OUTCOMES | INDICATOR | ACTIONS | RAG STATUS |
|---|---|---|---|
| • The IFCA will publish its enforcement risk register and strategy, clearly setting out its approach to achieving regulatory compliance and potential sanctions that may be applied for infringements and/or offences.<br>• The IFCA will have developed consistency in regulations (byelaws) with other organisations.<br>• The IFCA will manage operational activity (e.g., through a Tasking & Co-ordination Group) and capture, record, evaluate and disseminate intelligence that is compatible with partner organisations. It is engaged in joint working with partner organisations.<br>• Warranted Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Officers (IFCOs) will be trained and accredited to nationally agreed standards. They will maintain professionalism and make appropriate interventions to deliver efficient, effective enforcement activity. | **SC2A:** The IFCA will ensure its enforcement risk register and strategy are published and available on its website from 1 April each year. | ▸ Analyse enforcement information, producing and disseminating reports through committees and the annual report.<br>▸ Review and update the risk register as required.<br>▸ Include enforcement risk-based approach information in the annual plan. | |
| | **SC2B:** The IFCA will demonstrate in its Annual Report how it has worked with other regulators to achieve consistent quality, application, and enforcement of management measures. | ▸ Work with and report on involvement with Regional Fisheries Enforcement Group, Tactical Agency meetings (with MMO, EA and Police), National Inshore Marine Enforcement Group (NIMEG), links to National Enforcement Agencies (Gangmasters Licencing Authority and Food Crime Unit).<br>▸ Participate in Government Agency Intelligence Network (GAIN).<br>▸ Build agreed regulations (i.e., byelaws) that enable fair and effective management of fisheries activities. Use voluntary codes where appropriate.<br>▸ Promote education and awareness of regulations and voluntary agreements.<br>▸ Collaborate with partners and report on intelligence sharing agreements. | |
| | **SC2C:** The IFCA will compile records of enforcement activity in a standard format; provide them to the National Inshore Marine Enforcement Group (NIMEG) and publish them on its website. | ▸ Maintain and develop a standard format.<br>▸ Report record of enforcement to NIMEG.<br>▸ Utilisation of CLUE to share compliance information with MMO and IFCA partners.<br>▸ Collate and publish a record of enforcement on website. | |
| | **SC2D:** The IFCA will adopt the national Code of Conduct for IFCOs, which will be reviewed annually and published on its website by 1 April. | ▸ Work with NIMEG to produce a code of conduct and review.<br>▸ Publish the code on the website. | |

| OUTCOMES | INDICATOR | ACTIONS | RAG STATUS |
|---|---|---|---|
| • The IFCA will publish its enforcement risk register and strategy, clearly setting out its approach to achieving regulatory compliance and potential sanctions that may be applied for infringements and/or offences.<br>• The IFCA will have developed consistency in regulations (byelaws) with other organisations.<br>• The IFCA will manage operational activity (e.g., through a Tasking & Co-ordination Group) and capture, record, evaluate and disseminate intelligence that is compatible with partner organisations. It is engaged in joint working with partner organisations.<br>• Warranted Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Officers (IFCOs) will be trained and accredited to nationally agreed standards. They will maintain professionalism and make appropriate interventions to deliver efficient, effective enforcement activity. | **SC2E:** The Code of Conduct for IFCOs is reflected in work objectives and annual appraisals for all Warranted Officers. | ▸ Officer performance plans incorporate code of conduct objectives.<br>▸ Appraisals carried out accordingly. | |
| | **SC2F:** Warranted Officers attain accreditation. All undertake Continuing Professional Development. | ▸ Officer performance plans incorporate accreditation objectives.<br>▸ Officer performance plans incorporate development targets. | |

# Delivery of Success Criterion 2: Compliance & Enforcement

Sussex IFCA works to support the sustainable use of sea fisheries resources within the district through a combination of engagement, monitoring, compliance and enforcement activities. Throughout the year, our Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Officers maintained a regular presence around the Sussex coast, conducting patrols at sea, onshore and by drone, as well as inspecting fishing activity and engaging directly with fishers and local communities.

Enforcement activity reflected the seasonal nature of Sussex fisheries, with officers focusing on some key fisheries including bass, scallop, whelk, and other shellfish potting. Marine Protected Areas remained a year-round priority, alongside areas where towed fishing gear is prohibited. Officers focused on the education and enforcement of the MPA management measures, the new Hand Gathering (Restrictions and Permitting) Byelaw, the Minimum Size (Fish, Crustacea and Mollusc) Byelaw, and recreational bass fishing regulations.

The infographic below provides an overview of compliance and enforcement activity carried out across the district during the year. Despite reduced boarding capability during the middle part of the year while Merlin underwent repairs, and delays to the launch of the new vessel Osprey, officers maintained a strong enforcement presence across the district.

Officers conducted 40 sea patrols, 74 shore patrols and 16 drone patrols, maintaining a visible presence across the district and helping to deter illegal fishing activity. Patrol vessels Watchful and Merlin covered almost 3,000 nautical miles, while officers travelled more than 10,500 miles on shore-based patrols. These activities resulted in 480 fishing vessel sightings, 89 boarding and shore-based inspections, and 21 spot inspections.

Sussex IFCA adopts a risk-based approach to compliance and enforcement, with activity focused on areas where the risk of non-compliance or environmental impact is greatest. Priorities change throughout the year to reflect seasonal fisheries, levels of fishing activity, protected area management and information received from fishers, partner agencies and routine patrols. During the year, officers received or submitted 193 intelligence reports, helping to identify patterns of activity and inform operational priorities.



*Fisheries inspection of smaller fishing vessels are made easier through the use of our FPV Merlin*

The Authority's enforcement activity reflected generally high levels of compliance across the district. Most issues identified were resolved through advice, education and early intervention, with 20 verbal warnings or advisory letters and 6 official written warnings being issued. Two cases resulted in Fixed Administrative Penalties (FAPs), while no cases progressed to prosecution.

Officers exercise powers under the Marine and Coastal Access Act (MaCAA) 2009 to inspect commercial and recreational fishing vessels, fishing gear and shore-based fishing or hand gathering activities. Where necessary, officers have powers to seize fish, fishing gear and other items for evidential purposes. While enforcement action remains an important part of our role, officers also work closely with fishers and local communities to improve understanding of regulatory requirements and encourage compliance.

Sussex IFCA continues to work closely with partners including the Marine Management Organisation (MMO), Environment Agency (EA), Border Force, local authorities and the police. During the year 19 Tasking and Co-ordination Group meetings were held, bringing together partner agencies to share intelligence and coordinate activity, also to support joint enforcement priorities across the district.

Sussex IFCA continued to use the CLUE intelligence and case management system, which is now used by all IFCAs and the MMO. The system has improved the

# Compliance & Enforcement

2025 - 2026

**74** Shore Patrols

Drone Patrols **16**
Drone Hours **17**

**193** Intelligence Reports

**4** Fixed Administrative Penalties

**20** Verbal Warnings
**Official Written Warnings** 6

**458** Vessels sighted at sea



**41** **Boarding Inspections** undertaken at sea

**3,485** **Nautical miles covered by FPV Watchful & FPV Merlin**

**143** Port Visits

## **Delivery of Success Criterion 2** continued:

way intelligence is recorded, shared and analysed, which helps identify patterns of activity and direct enforcement effort.

Sussex IFCA's patrol vessels, vehicles and drone capability continue to play an important role in monitoring activity across the district. The drone in particular, continued to strengthen our ability to monitor fishing activity and gather evidence, particularly in harder to reach locations.



*Officer checking an angler's bass catch for compliance with the Minimum Size Byelaw*




*Joint operation between Sussex IFCA and EA resulting in seized bass from the River Adur*

| Category | Metric | Detail | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Information Reports** | Information Reports Processed | Reports received, recorded and analysed to support the identification and investigation of potential fisheries offences | 39 | 41 | 63 | 50 | **193** |
| **Inspections at Sea** | Vessel Patrols | Count any patrol by an of the SxIFCA vessels (mother/daughter boat combination counts as one patrol) | 10 | 8 | 9 | 13 | **40** |
| | Vessels Inspections | Commercial or recreational fishing vessels inspected in pursuit of Sussex IFCAs' regulatory duties | 14 | 1 | 14 | 12 | **41** |
| | Vessels Monitored | Fishing vessels sighted at sea, whether underway or engaged in fishing | 187 | 68 | 108 | 95 | **458** |
| **Inspections on Shore** | Shore Patrols | Patrols undertaken to inspect or observe commercial or recreational fishing activity or hand gathering activity | 15 | 29 | 17 | 13 | **74** |
| | Port Visits | Individual visits to port, harbours, beaches and landing sites during shore patrols | 32 | 72 | 24 | 15 | **143** |
| | Spot Inspection | Officer checks of fishers, hand gatherers or anglers where no catch was present to inspect a full inspection form was therefore not completed | 12 | 3 | 1 | 5 | **21** |
| | Premises Inspections | Markets, merchants, refrigerated units, retailers, food producers/outlets | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 | **6** |
| | Shore Inspections | Includes vessels and other first-hand observations of fish/shellfish as it was landed ashore from a vessel. Includes vessel gear/fish checks in port/ashore, diver and shore angler catchers, vehicle contents and catch from shore hand gatherers where inspection forms were completed | 12 | 19 | 5 | 9 | **45** |
| **Drone Patrols** | Drone Hours | Total hours that the Sussex IFCA DJI Matrice 300 Drone has be flown during compliance or research operations | 4+ | 6+ | 2+ | 4+ | **17** |
| | Drone Patrols | Use of unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) to monitor and survey specific areas for compliance or conservation work. | 3 | 6 | 2 | 5 | **16** |
| **Investigation Outcomes** | Verbal Warnings/ Advisory | Advice, guidance or warnings issued in response to minor breaches of legislation where no further action was required | 4 | 12 | 2 | 2 | **20** |
| | Official Written Warnings | Formal warnings issued where sufficient evidence of an offence existent, but prosecution was not considered the most appropriate outcome | 3 | 0 | 1 | 2 | **6** |
| | FAPs | Financial Administrative Penalties issued as an alternative to prosecution | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | **2** |
| | Court Prosecutions | Cases progressed to prosecution through the courts, individuals and companies | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | **0** |

| Financial Administrative Penalties | |
|---|---|
| **Date of Offence** | **FAP** |
| 06/08/2025 | Commercial fisher, Pagham. Fishing with two nets with less than 1.5m of water above the headline, contrary to Sussex IFCA Fixed Engines Byelaw. Penalty Level 2. First Offence £500. |
| 13/12/2025 | Commercial fisher, Selsey. Commercial bass netting for European seabass from the shore, contrary to Council Regulation (EU) 2020/123. Penalty Level 3. First Offence £1000. |

*FPV Watchful on sea patrol*
*– on approach to a fishing vessel for inspection*



# Success Criterion 3 Management Measures

## IFCAs use evidence based and appropriate measures to manage the sustainable exploitation of sea fisheries resources and deliver marine environmental protection within their districts

**Definition:** The IFCAs were created as statutory inshore regulators by the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009. They are relevant authorities for implementing international environmental commitments including the Birds, Habitats, Water and Marine Strategy Framework Directives and make an important contribution to securing a network of well managed marine protected areas, including European Marine Sites and Marine Conservation Zones. Fisheries Management Plans identify local management measures which should be based on evidence; be timely; subject to appropriate consultation and in step with national initiatives and priorities. An IFCA should balance the social and economic benefits of exploiting sea fisheries resources with the need to protect the environment. It should contribute to sustainable development.

| OUTCOMES | INDICATOR | ACTIONS | RAG STATUS |
|---|---|---|---|
| • The IFCA will identify issues likely to affect sustainable management of the marine environment in the IFC District; undertake risk assessment and gap analysis; review appropriateness of existing measures; evaluate management options and develop and implement proportionate marine management solutions.<br>• The IFCA will support implementation of a well-managed network of marine protected areas by: developing a range of criteria-based management options; implementing management measures to ensure that inshore fisheries activities comply with the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 and the revised approach to managing commercial fisheries in European Marine Sites; and that local management contributes to delivery of targets for the Marine Strategy Framework Directive, Water Framework Directive and Marine Plans.<br>• The IFCA will develop Fisheries Management Plans for priority species where appropriate. Shared objectives will be developed with identified partners; actions identified and best practice reflected so that management makes a contribution to sustainable development. | **SC3A:** The IFCA will record site-specific management considerations for Marine Protected Areas and report progress to the Authority. | ▸ Work with partners to promote sustainable management and further the objectives of MPAs and MCZs.<br>▸ Utilise community engagement strategies to involve stakeholders.<br>▸ Work with Natural England to understand and meet Conservation Objectives and site conditions.<br>▸ Gather evidence to support engagement and management decisions. To include fishing activity and impacts, habitat information, species information and climate change information.<br>▸ Develop fair and effective management measures. Implement regulation.<br>▸ Adhere to reporting mechanisms for MPAs and MCZs, and report back to the Authority meetings.<br>▸ Support partnership initiatives to work towards a good marine environment and ecology for i.e., Water Framework Directive, Marine Strategy Framework Directive, Habitats Directive and MaCAA. | |
| | **SC3B:** The IFCA will publish data analysis and evidence supporting new management measures, on its website. | ▸ Maintain a records system that demonstrates the best available, quality assured evidence is used in engagement and decision making.<br>▸ Publish consultation materials and Impact Assessments on the website. | |
| | **SC3C:** Management information (e.g., sampling and/or survey results) will be collected periodically after new management measures have been implemented, to demonstrate the extent of effectiveness of the intervention. | ▸ Maintain in house capability to collect, analyse and interpret evidence to inform management decisions and meet minimum standards set out in government guidance.<br>▸ Target evidence collection at extant management measures, and report on their effectiveness. | |

## **Success Criterion 3** continued:

| OUTCOMES | INDICATOR | ACTIONS | RAG STATUS |
|---|---|---|---|
| • The IFCA will identify issues likely to affect sustainable management of the marine environment in the IFC District; undertake risk assessment and gap analysis; review appropriateness of existing measures; evaluate management options and develop and implement proportionate marine management solutions.<br>• The IFCA will support implementation of a well-managed network of marine protected areas by: developing a range of criteria-based management options; implementing management measures to ensure that inshore fisheries activities comply with the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 and the revised approach to managing commercial fisheries in European Marine Sites; and that local management contributes to delivery of targets for the Marine Strategy Framework Directive, Water Framework Directive and Marine Plans.<br>• The IFCA will develop Fisheries Management Plans for priority species where appropriate. Shared objectives will be developed with identified partners; actions identified and best practice reflected so that management makes a contribution to sustainable development. | **SC3D:** The IFCA will have developed a range of criteria-based management options that are explained to stakeholders through the IFCA website and reviewed by 31 March each year. | ▸ Existing 'Review of Management' process translated into 4 year and annual planning and Byelaw development needs.<br>▸ Maintained updated information on the IFCA website. | |
| | **SC3E:** New IFCA management measures selected for development and implementation are delivered within agreed timescales. | ▸ Set appropriate timescales for management measures.<br>▸ Meet management measure timelines and targets.<br>▸ Development of byelaws and non-regulatory management measures in accordance with the Authority's 'Review of Management Measures' public consultation to inform management priorities. | |
| | **SC3F:** The IFCA will include shared agreed objectives and actions from Fisheries Management Plans in its own Annual Plan, which will be published by 31 March each year. | ▸ Incorporate management objectives and actions in annual plans. | |
| | **SC3G:** Progress made in relevant Fisheries Management Plan areas, including Maximum Sustainable Yield commitments, will be noted in the IFCA's Annual Report. | ▸ Annual Report will contain information on district fisheries management plans including reference to MSY for key species, and ecosystem metrics.<br>▸ IFCA will inform significant developments and marine licences with regard to sustainable fisheries management and the protection of the marine environment. | |

# Delivery of Success Criterion 3: Management Measures

During 2025-2026 Sussex IFCA continued with the development and review of management measures for the sustainable exploitation of sea fisheries resources combined with the delivery of marine environmental protection. This includes the collection and collation of data, as well as the analysis and presentation of that data in various formats. We have sought to gather stakeholders' views, opinions, and expertise allowing Sussex IFCA to make more informed management decisions. This information is then used to make evidence-based decisions on the most appropriate and effective management.

## Our Conservation & Research Work

Work conducted by the Conservation and Research (C&R) Team over the 2025-2026 financial year continued to provide the necessary evidence to inform and monitor the Authority's management decisions, and further our understanding of the inshore marine environment and fisheries. A wide range of C&R work was undertaken across multiple workstreams in the C&R Annual Plan, which is drawn in part from the strategic Four-Year C&R Plan 2024-2028.

Embedded within the Four-Year C&R Plan is the Authority's move towards a co-design and ecosystem-based approach to fisheries management, in alignment with Government policy as stated in the Fisheries Act 2020. Our evidence collection activities provide the information that underpins the development of sustainable fisheries management, whilst protecting associated ecosystem services.

Sussex IFCA's commitment to collaborative working and community engagement is illustrated in the work we conduct cooperatively with our partners. These collaborations are central to the way Sussex IFCA operates; sharing and employing skills, knowledge, and data to provide mutual benefits for all stakeholders and an effective service by maximising outputs from finite capacity and resources.

Our research provided evidence for the development of new legislation, and the review of existing byelaws, again balancing the protection of the marine environment with the social and economic benefits of fishing. The following summarises highlights of priority workstreams in 2025-2026.

## Marine Protected Area Management

### *Beachy Head East Marine Conservation Zone*

Sussex IFCA continued to support the QA process conducted by the MMO and Defra for Beachy Head East MCZ. This included ongoing communication with colleagues leading the QA process and provision of updated and adapted information regarding the associated Impact Assessment. In January 2026 the new byelaw was signed off by Secretary of State bringing in protections to 164km2 of the 195km2 site (84%) to promote the continued presence and recovery of conservation features such as chalk reef, Ross worm reef, and the short-snouted seahorse. This brings the total area of the Sussex IFCA District, within which bottom-towed gears are prohibited to ~30%, in line with the 30x30 government target to protect 30% of the marine environment by 2030.

Monitoring of Beachy Head East MCZ commenced with towed video surveys (TVS) and baited remote underwater video station surveys (BRUVS) conducted within the site in 2025, before the management was confirmed, therefore providing a baseline and a comparison dataset for future monitoring.

### *Chichester Harbour Habitat Regulations Assessment*

Chichester Harbour overlaps with three European Marine Sites, including Chichester and Langstone Harbours SPA, Chichester and Langstone Harbours Ramsar, and Solent Maritime SAC, with various designated habitats and bird species. Substantial fisheries management and mitigation measures are already in place in Chichester Harbour. Sussex IFCA concluded that fisheries will not have an adverse effect on the integrity of the European Marine Sites. Therefore, no additional management measures were required. The Chichester Harbour HRA was signed off by Natural England in December 2025.

## Byelaw Monitoring

### *Fishing Vessel Effort*

Fishing sightings data is collected on routine sea patrols; date, time, vessel name and PLN (port letters and numbers), latitude and longitude location of the fishing vessel, and fishing method (gear type) are recorded. These data are then used to produce fishing effort maps, the 2021-2025 ***Fishing Vessel Effort Report*** in its updated format is available on the Sussex IFCA website. The Fishing Vessel Effort Report is a vital evidence source for Sussex IFCA and is often central to our ability to assess interactions between fishing pressure

and various sea fisheries resources and conservation features in the District.

### *Shellfish Permit Byelaw 2015*

Sussex IFCA continues to collect and analyse Shellfish Permit (SFP) Byelaw catch return data to monitor and support the fishery. Catch return information for 2025 was collated into the ***SFP Annual Report***, including permit details, total landings, and catch per unit effort. The report summarises trends over time and across space for our key shellfish fisheries (lobster, edible crab, cuttlefish, whelk).

The SFP Byelaw came into force in 2016, as such Sussex IFCA commenced a management review in 2025-2026. As a first step in this process Research Officers developed a Semi-Structured Interview protocol and questions to establish what shellfish fishers in Sussex thought was working well, and not so well regarding the current management, and to tap into their local ecological knowledge to ensure this information could inform the review. Researchers also asked questions about the livelihoods of inshore small-scale fishers and what they need from the fishery. Of the 51 fishers that held commercial shellfish permits at the time, 24 (47%) were interviewed, and fishers from every major port in the District were included; a representative sample of the fleet. The interviews were transcribed and shared with researchers at Newcastle University for analysis of the themes; identifying, for example, areas of agreement or disagreement, across all the interviews. Newcastle also produced a report to allow Sussex IFCA to incorporate this information into the review process. In addition, the report is available to be used to advocate for inshore fishers at a broader level. An internal review of the byelaw (focused on the byelaw text) was conducted by Sussex IFCA and these resources will be used in conjunction to establish the priority areas for the review.

### *Nearshore Trawling Byelaw 2019*

Towed video surveys (TVS) were conducted across the western portion of the District, in line with the TVS conducted to-date to monitor the effect of the Nearshore Trawling Byelaw. Sussex IFCA continue to collaborate with the Zoological Society London on publication of a scientific paper on observed trends in habitat changes across the first 5 years of the TVS dataset, collected 2019-2024.

### *Baited Remote Underwater Video Stations*

Two baited remote underwater video stations (BRUVS) were purchased to expand the monitoring capabilities available at Sussex IFCA. BRUVS are baited metal frames and anything that interacts with the bait is recorded via camera. The BRUVS were purchased as they are becoming a standardised monitoring tool, and ease of operation means they can be deployed during sea patrols. Due to the year-round regularity of sea patrols, this increases C&R's potential for collection of monitoring data.



*Brown crab being measured as part of Crab and Lobster survey in Selsey*

### *Hand Gathering (Restrictions and Permitting) Byelaw 2021*

Sussex IFCA continues to conduct and develop a protocol for the monitoring of hand gathering. This includes development of a methodology to use drone technologies and spectral analysis to identify and quantify footprints in intertidal areas, allowing large areas to be monitoring very efficiently.

## Fisheries Management Plans

### *General Update*

Sussex IFCA have inputted wherever possible to discussions, evidence gathering, and consultations for all Fisheries Management Plans (FMP) relevant to the Sussex IFCA District. Offshore fisheries management is intrinsically linked to the success and sustainability of fisheries inshore, therefore the Conservation and Research Team have endeavoured to provide productive and effective contributions. With FMP's now moving into a delivery phase the support provided by Sussex IFCA has become more focused and included attending several in-person meetings.

### *Whelk FMP*

Sussex IFCA now attends Whelk FMP Dashboard meetings, also attended by colleagues from the MMO, Cefas, and Defra, and several other IFCA's to discuss practical implementation of a subset of the FMP actions, primarily focused on data collection. To-date the group has focused on what data is needed, how this can be most effectively and efficiently collected, and how FMP-specific data collection and requirements can be integrated with existing catch return systems for whelks across several IFCAs. Concerns remain unaddressed around the risk that introducing a permit system will drive aggregation of the fishery and any negative socioeconomic impacts which may result from that.

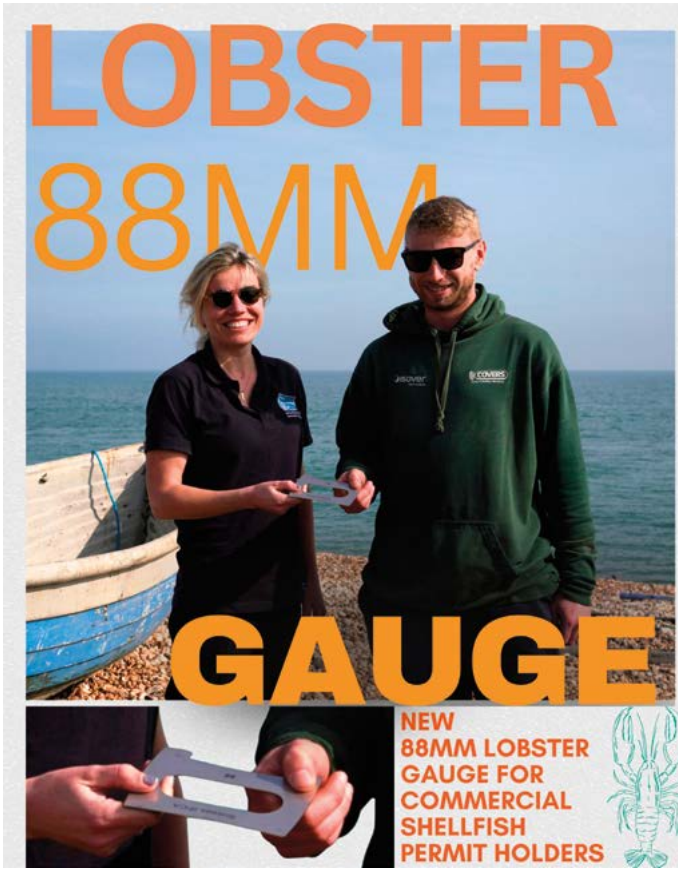
### *Crab & Lobster FMP*

Sussex IFCA have assisted with the rollout of the primary management measure relevant to the Sussex District; an increase in the lobster Minimum Conservation Reference Size to 88mm, to be followed by incremental increases to 89mm and 90mm over the next three years. This was achieved by purchasing and distributing 88mm shellfish gauges to all commercial permit holders free of charge.

Lobster gauge 88 mm distribution to commercial shellfish permit holder Roland Kelly in Hastings.

### *Bass FMP*

The Chief Officer participates in the Bass Management Group, established to progress implementation of the Bass FMP that was published in December 2023. Activity has prioritised implementation of the short term FMP actions, including directed subgroups conducting reviews of the Bass Authorisation system and Bass Management Measures, with outcomes being fed back to Defra. The group has worked towards providing guidance for the recreational and commercial sectors on issues such as bass handling, recording discards, and feeds into the MMO's published bass guidance.




*Lobster gauge distribution to shellfish permit holder Dan Langford – Selsey fisherman*

### *Channel Demersal Non-Quota Species FMP*

Sussex IFCA continued to support delivery of the Cuttlefish Action Plan. Sussex IFCA highlighted research into cuttlefish egg-laying behaviour, shared previous Authority

research with the MMO, and continued to circulate cuttlefish good-practice guidance to Shellfish Permit Holders. In March 2026, officers attended all three MMO stakeholder engagement events held within the District, and circulated the invite and subsequent survey to commercial Shellfish Permit Holders.

## Marine Case Management System

### *Brighton Marina Maintenance Dredging*

Sussex IFCA has long had concerns around the impact and monitoring of the disposal of material collected through maintenance dredging in Brighton Marina, which occurs within an MCZ. Following strong community opposition and the prospect of Judicial Review, funded by Sussex Wildlife Trust, the MMO decided to revoke the license for re-application.

## Partnerships & Collaborative Projects

### *Fish Telemetry*

The ongoing work to maintain and download data from the acoustic telemetry array in Sussex has continued with great success, and the second scientific paper from the project has now been published. Officers continue to engage with the Acoustic Telemetry Working Group to discuss field operations, data, results, and future opportunities. The research team at the University of Plymouth, who lead the project, are now focused on acquiring funding for the next stage of the project and Sussex IFCA will continue to support this via Letters of Support and guarantee of in-kind contributions to facilitate the tagging of fish and the maintenance and expansion of the current array network.



*Small fish survey with Solent Seascape Project in Chichester Harbour*



*Officer holding a common shore crab as part of Sussex Shoresearch*

### *Sussex Kelp Restoration Project (SKRP)*

Sussex IFCA now focuses on the SKRP Research and Monitoring Group and Communications group, providing input to the science and engagement priorities of the partnership. This includes attendance at the relevant meetings, delivery of towed video surveys, and Sussex IFCA are also discussing the potential to take over the BRUVS surveys now that the associated PhD student has completed.

### *Small Fish Surveys*

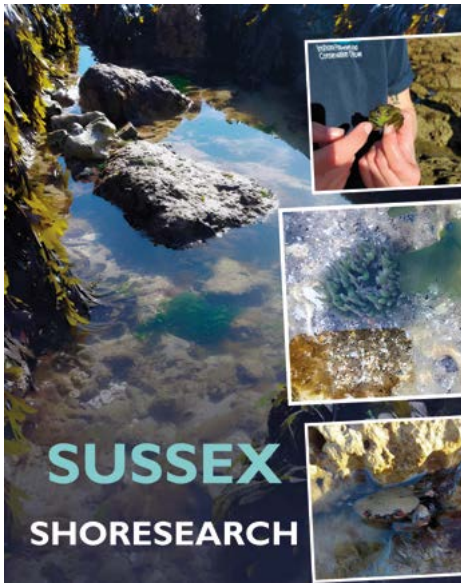
Officers continued their extensive assistance of Small Fish Surveys (SFS) in Chichester Harbour, led by researchers working under the Solent Seascape Project (SSP), from June to September. Sites included Cobnor Point, Copperas Point, Winner Bank, and Pilsey Island. Repeat sampling was conducted in October with Sparsholt College at Winner Bank and Copperas Point, this included training on small fish survey methods and species identification. Sussex IFCA Officers also assisted with conducting SFS in Rye, in collaboration with Sussex Wildlife Trust and within Rye Harbour Nature Reserve.

### *Technical Advisory Group (TAG)*

Sussex IFCA continues to engage with TAG to discuss current and future considerations for research efforts that drive inshore fisheries management. In 2025-2026 TAG has focused on the development and delivery of the Environmental Officers Course, to be delivered alongside the Competent Officers Course in Brixham, which has now run successfully for two years. The other focus of TAG has been the development of an Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Remote Electronic Monitoring (REM) strategy and various practical trials. In combination, AI and REM have the potential revolutionise the monitoring of fisheries by vastly increasing the level of detail acquired, while reducing the resource burden of fishers.

### *Whelk Working Group (WWG)*

The Whelk Working Group Meeting (WWG), co-chaired by Sussex IFCA, allowed members to share updates on stock assessment, size-at-maturity, gear selectivity, management and FMP-related work. Seafish reported that stakeholder engagement remained central to Whelk FMP implementation, with successful engagement of small-scale and inshore fisheries and IFCA feedback informing discussions. Sussex IFCA provided updated regarding the Shellfish Permit Byelaw review. A WWG newsletter has also been launched to share research and project updates across members more regularly.




*Shoresearch survey with Sussex Wildlife Trust*

### *Solent Seascape Project (SSP)*

The SSP is led by Blue Marine Foundation and aims to facilitate active restoration of habitats in and around the area of the Solent. Sussex IFCA continues to sit on the Technical Working Group and provide advice to various projects, including active restoration of native oyster habitat in inshore areas such as Chichester Harbour. We also assist small fish surveys in several sites in Chichester Harbour.

## Data Management

### *GIS Data Audit*

The maintenance and improvement of Sussex IFCA's GIS database is an ongoing project. Data was reviewed for correctness, with a How-To document produced to support consistent practice. Styles and maps were designed for visual consistency, and the database and cataloguing was updated regularly, strengthening data quality and usability.

## Education & Engagement Work

### *Shoresearch*

Sussex IFCA continue to support Sussex Wildlife Trust with their Shoresearch monitoring throughout the District, including supplying Officers to survey intertidal habitats and species. Officers engaged with other volunteers to educate them on the IFCA's role in the district.

### *Universities & Colleges*

Presentations on the role of IFCA's in fisheries management were given at Sussex University and Sparsholt College. Conservation and Research Officers also continue to support fieldwork conducted by undergraduates at University of Brighton each year.

# Success Criterion 4 Governance & Training

## IFCAs have appropriate governance in place and staff are trained and professional

**Definition:** IFCAs are statutory authorities and sit within the local government family. Authority members may be either general members or local councillors. They comply with Codes of Conduct and the Standing Orders that apply to meetings of local government committees. General members are appointed on merit, through open competition and for a term. They are subject to an annual performance appraisal.

An IFCA is funded by levy, charged to its member councils. Funding originates in local taxation. An IFCA is accountable for its use of public resources and should ensure that a proper auditing regime provides confidence in its commitment and spend of public money. It should make effective use of its resources, including staff and assets. An IFCA has a statutory obligation to prepare and publish Annual Plans and Annual Reports.

| OUTCOMES | INDICATOR | ACTIONS | RAG STATUS |
|---|---|---|---|
| • The IFCA will demonstrate its long-term strategic approach to sustainable marine management by having appropriate plan-making, review, update and amendment procedures in place. The IFCA will record its performance against corporate outcomes and indicators as soon as practically possible following the end of the financial year.<br>• Staff performance management systems will be in place that link to the IFCA success criteria. There will be an induction procedure for new joiners. Staff training and development needs will be identified. Performance will be managed and, where necessary, improvement procedures will be followed.<br>• The IFCA Committee will be supported by an organised, efficient and effective secretariat. New members will receive an induction pack and briefing from the Authority. There will be a rolling twelve-month schedule of quarterly Authority meetings. Notices of meetings and documentation will be made available in line with Standing Orders.<br>• IFCA Committee meetings will be held in public unless material is either confidential or exempt within the meaning of the Local Government Act 1972. | **SC4A:** The IFCA will publish a Plan on its website by 31 March, setting out the main objectives and priorities for the next financial year. A copy will be sent to the Secretary of State. | ▶ Priorities and objectives are discussed and agreed by staff and the Authority.<br>▶ Priorities for the plan will use evidence and be risk based.<br>▶ Priorities will include provision for the operational assets that underpin IFCA activities.<br>▶ Actions will be value for money.<br>▶ Create and publish an annual plan for each financial year. This will be a four-year plan with an annual review cycle.<br>▶ A copy of the plan will be sent to the Secretary of State. | March 2026 |
| | **SC4B:** After the end of each financial year, the IFCA will publish a Report on its website describing its activities, performance and a summary of audited financial information in that year, by 30 November. A copy will be sent to the Secretary of State. | ▶ Create and publish an annual report on the website by November.<br>▶ Report to include performance metrics.<br>▶ Report to include annual finance summary.<br>▶ Appropriate financial management controls and audits to be maintained.<br>▶ Administrative processes are in place to ensure control over expenses, procurement and time recording. | |
| | **SC4C:** IFCA staff will have annual performance management plans in place. Annual appraisals for all staff will have been completed by 31 May each year. | ▶ Individuals have performance plans that link to the IFCA annual plans.<br>▶ Objectives are discussed and set for individuals.<br>▶ Manager's objectives will include good internal communication to all staff.<br>▶ Personal development requirements for individuals are planned and completed.<br>▶ One-to-one meetings are held regularly, and appraisals are carried out in the fourth quarter of the year. | |

## **Success Criterion 4** continued:

| OUTCOMES | INDICATOR | ACTIONS | RAG STATUS |
|---|---|---|---|
| • The IFCA will demonstrate its long-term strategic approach to sustainable marine management by having appropriate plan-making, review, update and amendment procedures in place. The IFCA will record its performance against corporate outcomes and indicators as soon as practically possible following the end of the financial year.<br>• Staff performance management systems will be in place that link to the IFCA success criteria. There will be an induction procedure for new joiners. Staff training and development needs will be identified. Performance will be managed and, where necessary, improvement procedures will be followed.<br>• The IFCA Committee will be supported by an organised, efficient and effective secretariat. New members will receive an induction pack and briefing from the Authority. There will be a rolling twelve-month schedule of quarterly Authority meetings. Notices of meetings and documentation will be made available in line with Standing Orders.<br>• IFCA Committee meetings will be held in public unless material is either confidential or exempt within the meaning of the Local Government Act 1972. | **SC4D:** An efficient secretariat of IFCA staff support IFCA Authority meetings which are held quarterly and are quorate. Meeting documentation will meet Standing Orders. | ▸ Authority meetings are supported with timely and appropriate agendas and paperwork.<br>▸ Minutes are recorded and issued.<br>▸ Standing orders and terms and conditions for members will be adhered to. | |
| | **SC4E:** The IFCA will have demonstrated, in its Annual Report, how marine, land and water management mechanisms in the Inshore Fisheries & Conservation District have worked responsively and effectively together. | ▸ Authority decision making will be informed and reflect marine management mechanisms including the MaCAA obligations, the South Marine Plan, Water Framework Directive, Marine Strategic Framework Directive, the Habitats Directive, enforcement risks and the blue growth agenda.<br>▸ Authority decision making will be informed and reflect other IFCAs, MMO, EA, NE, Cefas and local council priorities.<br>▸ Transparency will be ensured by publication of Committee meeting minutes and agendas. | |

# Delivery of Success Criterion 4: Governance & Training

### *Authority*

Sussex IFCA continued to operate in accordance with its established governance arrangements throughout the year. Policies and procedures remained under regular review, helping ensure the Authority's work was delivered in a consistent and transparent manner.

Authority and committee meetings took place as planned during the year. These meetings provided an oversight of Sussex IFCA's activities and supported decision-making across a range of fisheries, conservation and operational matters. Further information can be found within the Governance Report section of this Annual Report.

### *Annual Planning and Reporting*

The Annual Plan for 2025-2026 was approved by the Authority, published on the Sussex IFCA website and submitted to the Secretary of State by the 31 March 2025.

Sussex IFCA also published and submitted its Annual Report for 2024-2025, providing a summary of the work delivered during the previous reporting year.

### *Staff and Recruitment*

During the year, Sussex IFCA undertook a number of recruitment campaigns to fill vacant posts and support the continued delivery of its work.

Appointments were made to several positions, including Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Officers, Conservation and Research Officers, a Senior Conservation and Research Officer, and a Senior Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Officer (Skipper). These roles support the delivery of fisheries management, compliance, conservation, research and vessel operations across the district.

### *Training and Development*

All staff completed annual performance reviews during the year. These reviews help identify training requirements, development needs and areas where additional support may be beneficial.

Training undertaken during the year covered a range of subjects, including health and safety, enforcement and compliance, vessel operations and seamanship, survey methods, scientific data collection and Geographic Information Systems (GIS).

Learning and development is not limited to formal training courses. Staff also developed their knowledge and experience through participation in working groups, technical meetings, conferences, workshops, joint operations and collaborative projects with partner organisations. These activities provide opportunities to exchange knowledge, remain informed about developments affecting fisheries and marine management, and learn from the experience of others working within the sector.

## Workshops and Conferences

### *Coastal Futures*

Officers from the Conservation & Research (C&R) and Senior Management Teams attended Coastal Futures at the Royal Geographical Society in London. Bringing in colleagues working in the marine space from various industries Coastal Futures is an excellent networking event and was attended by many other IFCA colleagues. Topics discussed included developing appropriate ecological mitigation and using local ecological knowledge to inform management.

### *TAG Conference*

Officers from the C&R Team attended the Technical Advisory Group Conference. TAG brings together the science and research leads from all regional IFCAs and the conference is an opportunity for departmental networking and knowledge sharing. Officers Dan Karparis and Em Denton-Smith presented on the Shellfish Permit Byelaw catch return system and our work to develop a protocol for monitoring hand gathering using drones, respectively.

### *Ocean Symposium*

Several Officers attended the Ocean Symposium, which brings together regulators, NGO's, local initiatives, and community members, to discuss regional and wider marine work. Sussex IFCA presented a stall showcasing the work and management of the Authority, and the Chief Officer, Rob Pearson, opened the symposium to welcome delegates and sat on a panel discussion.

### *Sharkademy*

Senior C&R Officer, Sol Lucas, was an instructor on the annual Sharkademy residency, offering funded places to study shark science and research. Sol presented on BRUVs methodologies, pelagic shark ID, and recent shark research in a combination of classroom-based activities and fieldwork.

### *Oceanographic Magazine x Finisterre Event*

C&R Officers attended the Oceanographic 'Restoration, recovery, and reconnection' public event at the Finisterre clothing store in Brighton on 19 February 2026. The C&R Manager, George Balchin, gave a presentation with an overview of the IFCAs, the work done on the Nearshore Trawling Byelaw 2019 and general principals of passive restoration, followed by taking part on the panel in a Q&A session.

### *Coastal Health and Livelihoods Project*

Officers attended a Cefas-led workshop at the Royal Geographic Society. The Coastal Health, Livelihoods and Environment programme developed a Coastal Health Operational Model aimed at enhancing preparedness and response to adverse

### *A summary of externally delivered training undertaken during the year is provided in the table below.*

| Training Type | Date | Training | Attendees |
|---|---|---|---|
| Mandatory Operational | April 2025 | 1 Day – MCA Approved – Entry into Enclosed Dangerous Spaces | 1 Officer |
| Mandatory Operational | April 2025 | RYA – ENG1 Seafarers Medical | 2 Officers |
| Professional Development | June 2025 | MMO & DEFRA De Minimis Assessment Workshop | 2 Officers |
| Professional Development | July 2025 | Field equipment BRUVs and Towed Array (internal) | C&R Officers |
| Professional Development | July 2025 | 5 Days – RYA – Yachtmaster Offshore Theory | 1 Officer |
| Professional Development | August 2025 | SFJ Awards – Level 3 Certificate in Fisheries and Marine Enforcement | 1 Officer |
| Mandatory Operational | August 2025 | RYA – ENG1 Seafarers Medical | 1 Officer |
| Mandatory Operational | August 2025 | 5 Days - STCW | 3 Officers |
| Professional Development | August 2025 | 1 Day – General Visual Line of Sight Certificate (Civil Aviation Authority) Theory, Practical and Assessment | 1 Officer |
| Professional Development | September 2025 | SFJ Awards– Level 3 Certificate in Fisheries and Marine Enforcement | 1 Officer |
| Mandatory Operational | September 2025 | MMO – CLUE Intelligence Training and Themis Training | 3 Officers |
| Mandatory Operational | September 2025 | RYA – ENG1 Seafarers Medical | 1 Officer |
| Mandatory Operational | September 2025 | 1-Day GDPR Training | All Staff |
| Mandatory Operational | September 2025 | Level 2 Food Hygiene and Safety | 3 Officers |
| Professional Development | September 2025 | Basics of Geographic Coordinate Systems | 1 Officer |
| Mandatory Operational | September 2025 | 1 Day – MCA – Workboat Code 3 Safety Management Systems Training | 3 Officers |
| Mandatory Operational | September 2025 | 2 Days – Workboat Code 3 Designated Person Training | 3 Officers |
| Mandatory Operational | September 2025 | 2 Days – Workboat Code 3 Lead Auditors Training | 2 Officers |
| Mandatory Operational | September 2025 | 5 Days – RYA – Yachtmaster Offshore | 1 Officer |
| Professional Development | September 2025 | 1 Day – Colour Assessment and Diagnosis (CAD) Test | 1 Officer |
| Professional Development | September 2025 | 2 Days – Mental Health First Aider Course (MHFA England) | 1 Staff |
| Mandatory Operational | October 2025 | MCA – 5 Days – Small Ships Electronic Charting System (Approved) & Bridge Watchkeeping | 1 Officer |
| Mandatory Operational | October 2025 | MCA – 1 Day – Small Ships Radar and Meteorology Course | 1 Officer |
| Mandatory Operational | October 2025 | 1 Day – Data Protection Officer Training | 3 Staff |
| Professional Development | October 2025 | AAT Level 2 Certificate in Accounting | 1 Staff |
| Mandatory Operational | October 2025 | RYA – ENG1 Seafarers Medical | 1 Officer |
| Mandatory Operational | November 2025 | RYA – ENG1 Seafarers Medical | 1 Officer |
| Professional Development | November 2025 | Essex Police Marine Unit RIB training | 3 Officers |
| Professional Development | December 2025 | Advanced Professional Certificate in Investigation Practice | 1 Officer |
| Professional Development | Dec – Mar 2025 | Advanced Professional Certificate in Investigation Practice | 1 Officer |
| Mandatory Operational | January 2026 | RYA – ENG1 Seafarers Medical | 1 Officer |
| Mandatory Operational | February 2026 | MCA Approved – Small Workboat Stability Course | 1 Officer |
| Mandatory Operational | February 2026 | IFCA Competent Officers Course | 3 Officers |
| Professional Development | February 2026 | IFCA Environment, Science and Conservation (ESC) Course | 2 Officers |
| Professional Development | March 2026 | Marine Heritage Crime Workshop | 1 Officer |
| Professional Development | March 2026 | Advanced Professional Certificate in Investigation Practice | 1 Officer |
| Mandatory Operational | March 2026 | RYA – Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS) Short Range Certificate | 1 Officer |

coastal health events of unknown cause in the UK. The model proposes an operational structure for a multi-agency protocol for coastal incidents of unknown origin. At the workshop the attendees ran through the model to understand how response to an event would work in practice, learning from previous experiences and events, and how it would vary regionally.

### *IUCN and SeaLife Undulate Skate Workshop*

A C&R Officer attended the Undulate Skate in Britain and Ireland Strategic Workshop, facilitated by the IUCN, at the end of September. The purpose of the workshop was to agree on the framework for a new 10-year Strategy for undulate skates in Britain and Ireland. The workshop will be followed by a period of writing up the strategy (led by Helen Taylor, IUCN) followed by stakeholder approval of the document ahead of its publication.




*IUCN and SeaLife Undulate Skate Workshop 2025*

*Officers onboard fishing vessels carrying out Sussex IFCA Crab and Lobster survey*




*Officers carrying out measurement of nets to check compliance*



# Success Criterion 5 Evidence & Science

## IFCAs make the best use of evidence to deliver their objectives

**Definition:** IFCAs are statutory regulators for their Inshore Fisheries and Conservation District. Decision-making should be based on evidence. All IFCAs are supported by officers who pool their expertise and share best practice as a Technical Advisory Group (TAG). A programme of research activity and monitoring is planned, developed and updated in consultation with partners. The programme informs management decisions and supports justification for additional research and evidence gathering.

| OUTCOMES | INDICATOR | ACTIONS | RAG STATUS |
|---|---|---|---|
| • A strategic research plan that contributes to greater understanding of the marine environment and delivery of cost-effective management of sea fisheries resources.<br>• Standard Operating Procedures describe how data is captured and shared with principal partners.<br>• A list of research databases held by the IFCA and the frequency of their review.<br>• Non-confidential meta-data collected through the IFCA research programme should be recorded in a database available to the marine research community. | **SC5A:** The IFCA will demonstrate progress that has made towards identifying its evidence needs by publishing a research plan each year. | ▸ Create and publish a strategic 4 year and Annual Research Plan.<br>▸ IFCA evidence collection capability will be maintained.<br>▸ Ecosystem services evidence will be part of the evidence portfolio.<br>▸ Climate change trends and impacts will be part of the evidence portfolio.<br>▸ Fisheries activity, landing, economic values and impact will be part of the evidence portfolio.<br>▸ Species distribution, seasonality, life-cycle patterns and habitat information will be part of the evidence portfolio. | |
| | **SC5B:** The IFCA will publish a research report annually that demonstrates how evidence has supported decision making. | ▸ Create and publish an annual Research Report.<br>▸ Communicate research findings through accessible education and awareness strategies.<br>▸ Use evidence to inform IFCA decision making and influence others decision making. | |
| | **SC5C:** The IFCA's contribution to TAG and progress that has been made towards a national evidence needs programme will be recorded in the IFCA's Annual Report. | ▸ Support the IFCA Technical Advisory Group (TAG) and its work streams.<br>▸ Describe in the annual report the contribution towards building a national evidence needs programme. | |

# Delivery of Success Criteria 5: Evidence & Science

During 2025-2026, Sussex IFCA consistently met the specified indicators and criteria, as demonstrated by the publication of a forward-looking strategic **Conservation and Research Plan** and a retrospective strategic **Conservation and Research Report**. The Authority also actively contributed to the national IFCA Technical Advisory Group (TAG), with consistent attendance at all TAG meetings.

### *Research Planning*

A range of research planning and survey work was undertaken, including; small fish surveys, drone surveys, towed video surveys, baited remote underwater video surveys, and crab and lobster potting surveys. The array of acoustic receivers across the District was also maintained. These surveys were completed in collaboration with various partners including, Blue Marine Foundation, Solent Seascape Project, Sussex Wildlife Trust, Chichester Harbour Conservancy, Zoological Society London, and Cefas.

All survey activities that were planned in 2025-2026 were completed.

### *Research Reporting*

The Sussex IFCA publish Conservation and Research reports annually, demonstrating how evidence has supported decision making.

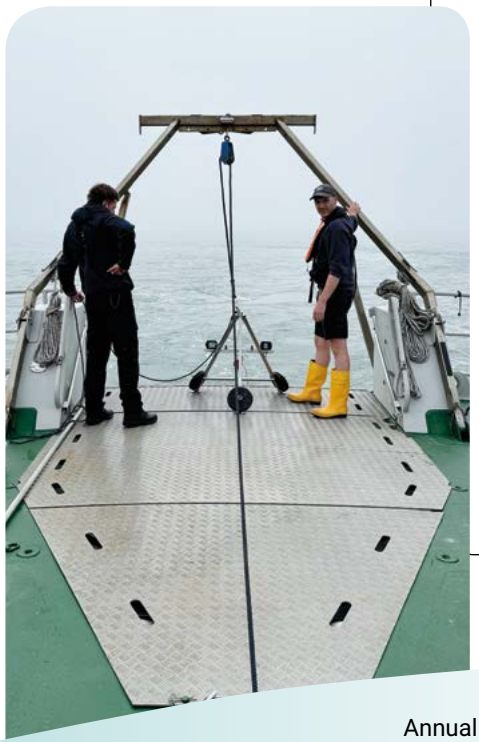
All evidence collected and utilised was formally reported to, and approved by, the Authority's Principal Committee and Technical Subcommittee.

Regular bimonthly meetings were held with the Authority's Natural England representative to review and discuss ongoing work related to Marine Protected Areas. These meetings supported the development of Habitats Regulations Assessments (HRAs). In addition, the Authority supported local organisations across 25 partnerships, helping to strengthen the overall operational capacity of all partners involved.

### *TAG & National Evidence Need*

Sussex IFCA Officers attend TAG meetings and contribute to the progress of national evidence programme requirements. Officers gave presentations on relevant workstreams to TAG members and work undertaken will be reported in Sussex IFCAs Conservation and Research Report.

In 2025-2026 this included discussion of drone-based monitoring and how this can be employed by IFCA's, as well as contributing the formulation of nationwide group led by Cefas and which is designed to be able to respond to mass mortality events and collect the data needed to investigate their causes.



**Evidence Example – Baited Remote Underwater Video Stations**

*To expand the cross-District monitoring capabilities available at Sussex IFCA two baited remote underwater video stations (BRUVS) were purchased from FjordStrong; a market leader in the development and supply of BRUVS. BRUVS are metal frames which are baited, and anything that interacts with the bait is then recorded via camera. The BRUVS were purchased as they are becoming a standardised monitoring tool, but primarily as the ease of deployment and recovery means they can be operated during routine sea patrols. Due to the regularity of sea patrols, this increases the level of monitoring above that which could be achieved by Conservation & Research Team alone.*

# Financial Summary

## Levy Income

The Authority is predominantly publicly funded, by means of annual statutory levies on its constituent Authorities (West Sussex County Council, East Sussex County Council and Brighton & Hove City Council), to undertake its Marine & Coastal Access Act (MaCAA) 2009 duties. The Authority's levy funding is essential for the implementation of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) defined High Level Objectives and the associated work programme described in the Authority's Annual Plan. The Authority sets the levies ahead of the financial year to ensure that budgeted expenditure is fully funded. The total amount of Levy income for the financial year 2025-2026 was £1,184,700.

The constituent Authorities fund the levies from the financial resources which are available to them, predominantly council tax receivable from local taxpayers; non-domestic rates payable by businesses in the area; and Government grants. MaCAA 2009 introduced new fisheries and conservation management duties, including the management of fishing activities within Marine Conservation Zones that lie within the Sussex IFCA's District. In recognition of the additional costs that would be incurred by Sussex IFCA in responding to these new duties, the Government has provided additional annual grants to its constituent Authorities each year through to 2025-2026, to mitigate the impact on levies.

## Charter, Grant, Permit and Other Income

17% of income, £237,029, was derived from grant receipts for projects, income from permits issued in accordance with the local Shellfish Byelaw and other income, including investment income. Additional grants were received from Defra to support the delivery of the Fisheries and Management Plan (FMP) programme. The income derived from each commercial shellfish permit is accounted for evenly over its two-year validity period. The total income from all permits in 2025-2026 was £17,013.

No income was generated from charter of the Authority's vessels in 2025-26.

## Expenditure

Expenditure on employees in 2025-2026, including employer statutory and contractual contributions, training and development, represented 66% (£905,757) of total expenditure. The increase year on year, results from the national pay award, additional headcount to support the FMP requirements, and increased training needs. Other notable categories of expenditure were the operation and maintenance of vessels, £46,650, and compliance, research and project costs, £36,629. In addition to support and administrative costs, an annual depreciation charge is made to account for the reduction in value of vessels and other equipment as they age. Premises and administration costs are similar to the previous year. At the end of the year there was a surplus of £58,430, which was added to our reserves.

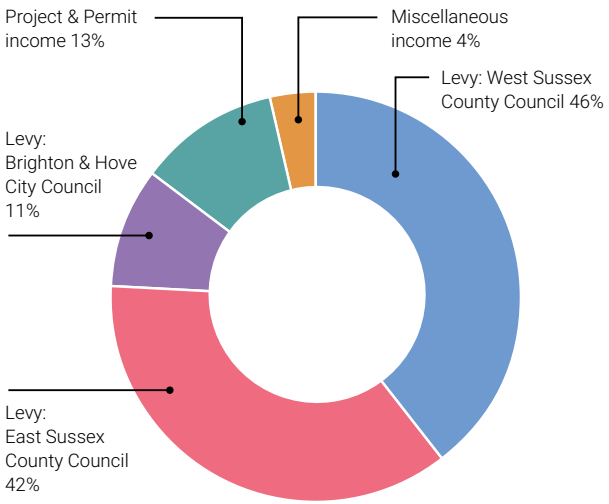
**Examination of Accounts:** In the interest of public assurance and accountability, the Authority has chosen to put in place an independent assurance review of its annual accounts. In 2025-2026, this review was undertaken by James Todd & Co, who concluded that they had no cause to believe that in any material respect:

1) accounting records were not kept as required by the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014;
2) the financial statements do not accord with those records.

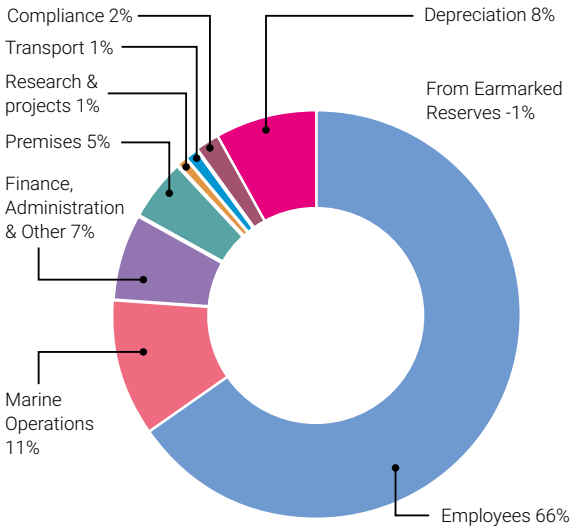


# Statement of Income and Expenditure

**Income 2025/2026**




**Expenditure 2025/2026**




| | 2025/2026 £ |
|---|---|
| **Income** | |
| West Sussex County Council | 553,900 |
| East Sussex County Council | 499,500 |
| Brighton and Hove City Council | 131,300 |
| **Total Levies** | **1,184,700** |
| Project Income & Permit income | 188,931 |
| Miscellaneous income | 48,098 |
| **Total Income** | **1,421,729** |
| **Expenditure** | |
| Employees | 905,757 |
| Marine Operations | 146,650 |
| Finance, Administration & Other | 94,909 |
| Premises | 67,452 |
| Transport | 15,177 |
| Research, Projects & Donations | 10,696 |
| Compliance | 25,933 |
| Depreciation | 107,930 |
| Contribution (from)/to Earmarked Reserves | -11,205 |
| **Total Expenditure** | **1,363,299** |
| Surplus for year transferred to Reserves | 58,430 |
| **Total** | **1,421,729** |

**In accordance with Statutory Instrument 2010 No. 2199, Article 16**

(1) The expenses incurred by the Authority must be defrayed by the relevant councils in accordance with paragraph (2)

(2) The percentage of those expenses to be defrayed by each relevant council is as follows:

| | | 2025/26 Levy |
|---|---|---|
| West Sussex County Council | 46.7% | £553,900 |
| East Sussex County Council | 42.2% | £499,500 |
| Brighton and Hove City Council | 11.1% | £131,300 |
| | 100.0% | £1,184,700 |

**Balance Sheet at 31 March 2026**

| | £ | £ |
|---|---|---|
| **Long Term Assets** | | |
| Historic cost or value | | |
| : Vessels | 1,388,647 | |
| : Equipment | 141,750 | |
| : Vehicles | 27,888 | |
| | | 1,558,285 |
| **Accumulated Depreciation** | | |
| : Vessels | (566,791) | |
| : Equipment | (104,726) | |
| : Vehicles | (10,469) | |
| | | (681,986) |
| | | 876,299 |
| **Short Term Assets** | | |
| Debtors | 0 | |
| Prepayments | 58,427 | |
| VAT reimbursement due | 14,041 | |
| Cash | 1,439,296 | |
| | | 1,511,764 |
| **Short Term Liabilities** | | |
| Creditors | (67,237) | |
| Income in advance | (207,524) | |
| Deferred income | (10,081) | |
| Fixed Asset Penalties | (15,500) | |
| HMRC and Pension Fund | (32,796) | |
| | | (333,138) |
| **Net Assets** | | **2,054,925** |
| Revenue Reserve at start of year | 819,341 | |
| Surplus/(Deficit) for year | 58,430 | |
| Revenue Reserve at end of year | | 877,772 |
| Earmarked Reserves | | 286,585 |
| Revaluation Reserve | | 890,568 |
| **Total Reserves** | | **2,054,925** |

# Resources

## Premises

The Authority moved to its current premises at 12a Riverside Business Centre, Shoreham-by-Sea, BN43 6RE in 2012. Following a review and negotiations with the landlord, Euro Property Holdings Limited, a new 5-year lease began in December 2022 and expires December 2027. The rent will remain at £36,000 per annum for the new lease period. The premises continue to provide good work base facilities at a reasonable cost. The Authority also leases two container units, one at Shoreham Yacht Club and one at Littlehampton Marina. These provide valuable storage and work areas to support our maintenance and operational activities.

*FPV Watchful during annual lift-out period*




## Authority's Vessels

During the 2025–2026 reporting period, the recruitment of three additional staff significantly increased the Authority's capacity to undertake enforcement patrols and research projects. This additional resource enabled vessels to remain operational when enhanced crewing levels were required under the new Workboat Code 3, while allowing research activities and enforcement duties to be delivered concurrently.

Throughout the reporting period, the Authority's vessels maintained a continuous programme of compliance activity. FPV *Merlin* and the newly commissioned FPV *Osprey* conducted boarding operations, focusing on commercial and recreational angling during the summer months and on potting and scallop-fishing vessels during the winter.

FPV *Watchful* undertook fishing-gear hauling inspections, with particular emphasis on suspected potting infringements under the Shellfish Permit Byelaw.

Sussex IFCA's vessels also supported the Authority's established programme of acoustic array maintenance, towed-video surveys and Baited Remote Underwater Video (BRUVs) surveys. These activities primarily generated research data to assess the effectiveness and impacts of management measures within Sussex Bay.

### FPV *Watchful*

The Authority's primary sea going asset is Fisheries Patrol Vessel (FPV) *Watchful*, berthed at Aldrington Marina. FPV *Watchful* is an 18-metre vessel capable of operating both in and offshore. The integrated ramp allows for *Watchful* to carry a 5.5 metre daughter vessel which is primarily used for conducting boarding operations as part of our compliance work. The daughter vessel can also be removed, and decking put in its place to provide a large open deck area. The deck area is a huge advantage to the Sussex IFCA in delivering both research and compliance objectives – the additional space allows for longer strings of fishing gear to be hauled and inspected, as well as allowing for the safe deployment of research equipment such as our ROV, BRUVs and towed video sleds.

### FPV *Merlin*

The Authority also operates an 8 metre Rigid Inflatable Boat (RIB), FPV *Merlin*, launched in 2013, built by MST with funding support from the Environment Agency. The vessel is owned and operated by Sussex IFCA and boasts a waterjet propulsion unit which allows the vessel to be operated in extremely shallow waters. This is extremely valuable for both research, compliance and charter operations both near shore and within the Sussex district's many rivers. The vessel is capable of safely operating at high speeds with a relatively long operational range which allows it to be used at short notice to rapidly respond to any potential compliance issues.




*FPV Osprey preparing to launch from Watchful for officers to conduct boarding inspections*

*FPV Merlin during a routine patrol*



**FPV *Osprey***

FPV *Osprey* is an integral asset to the Sussex IFCA fleet. Boasting speeds of over 30 knots the vessel is a state-of-the-art 5.5 metre RIB, with full navigation and radar equipment. Operating under the new Workboat Code 3, FPV *Osprey*'s primary role is as a boarding vessel, providing a safe platform for Sussex IFCA Officers to carry out routine inspections on the Sussex inshore fishing fleet.

## Authority's Vehicles

Sussex IFCA has utilised fleet vehicles for land-based compliance, enforcement, and research throughout the reporting year. The Authority's Citroen Berlingo van, purchased in 2013, was replaced with a fully electric Toyota Proace in June 2025.

The Authority maintains a service level agreement for the hire and maintenance of a 1.6T Kia Sportage Estate for use on shore patrols, surveys and general Authority business. The current lease agreement for the vehicle began in 2023 and is due to run until November 2027 at a total cost of £24,000 + VAT.

**Kia Sportage:**

- Total mileage 1 April 2025 – 31 March 2026: 9017
- Total fuel cost: £572.03

**Citroen Berlingo** (April 2025 – June 2025)**:**

- This vehicle was replaced in June 2025.

**Toyota Proace** [Electric] (June 2025 – March 2026)**:**

- Total mileage: 1,830
- Estimated charging cost: ~£176* (*estimate based on office electricity rate and typical van efficiency; not a metered or receipted figure*).



## Drone

Sussex IFCA has Small Unmanned Aircraft (SUA) capability, effective November 2021 when the Authority purchased a DJI M300 RTK, fitted with a Zenmuse H20-T camera. Use of drones has been adopted widely across multiple law enforcement agencies for the detection of crimes and the evidencing of offences. The drone is used by authorised Sussex IFCA Officers for fisheries enforcement and fisheries management. It can be used in dynamic environments, as a fast response to monitor, record and evidence illegal activity that may not otherwise be seen, as well as being used for routine observations and checks.

The Sussex IFCA drone has a quad-sensor camera featuring 20MP zoom, 12MP wide angle capabilities, a laser rangefinder, thermal imaging, zoom and wide-angle functions. The drone is used for management and policy functions, to observe and monitor Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) and other areas of environmental concern. The enhanced capability of the Sussex IFCA drone and GPS technology offers IFCOs an effective method to record evidence of possible offences, from perspectives not previously possible. The drone is used to aid in the collection of intelligence, act as a deterrent, and improve the prevention and detection of fisheries offences.

More information on our drone asset can be found on the Sussex IFCA website: ***Assets***

# Employees & Organisational Structure

The Authority employs a specialist team of multi-disciplined professionals to undertake its work. Individually, they have extensive skills, knowledge and experience in their respective roles. The organisation comprises: compliance and enforcement, marine operations, conservation and research, finance and administration functions. Staff are overseen by a senior management team (SMT); the Chief and Deputy Chief Officers, which in turn reports to Authority members.

The current organisational structure is shown in the adjoining figure. All staff are based at 'Riverside', a centrally located coastal office base in Shoreham-by-Sea.

All Officers carry the status of 'Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Officer'. Enforcement officers are issued with an Inshore Fisheries & Conservation warrant card. Officers may also be joint warranted with relevant authorities that manage the marine environment.

### Chief Fisheries and Conservation Officer

**Mr. Robert Pearson** MIFM M.Sc. B.Sc.

- Head of Service for Authority and lead within the Senior Management Team
- Management of the IFCA and Reporting Officer to Committee
- National policy liaison role and media contact
- Chief Officer in respect of financial management
- Strategic development of policies and plans

### Deputy Chief Fisheries and Conservation Officer

**Ms. Angharad Purcell** B.Sc.

- Member of the Senior Management Team
- Development of policies, plans and research and implementation of review of management measures
- Oversees sector and operational managers
- Strategic lead on fisheries compliance and training

### Committee & Communications Manager

**Ms. Rebecca Belleni** B.A.

- Manage Authority and Subcommittee meetings, papers and produce minutes. Support member appointments and governance processes
- Manage social media, communications, and design of promotional and guidance materials
- Management of day-to-day office administration, systems, suppliers, equipment and support for the SMT
- Support recruitment and HR administration, while taking responsibility for health and safety, fire safety and other organisational requirements
- Support permitting processes, enquiries and operational activities

### Strategic Advisor & Clerk (Contractor)

**Mr. Tim Dapling** MIFM M.Sc. B.Sc.

- Advisory role on governance, constitutional and procedural matters to the Authority
- Maintain appropriate governance policies, standing orders and codes of conduct for members
- Strategic support on fisheries and environmental management

### Finance Manager

**Ms. Ruth Harrison**

- Manage, monitor and maintain budgetary and financial information
- Plan and monitor the financial position of the Authority as directed by the Senior Management Team
- Responsible for implementation of Annual Audit and implementation of financial regulations
- Payroll and pension payments

### Vessel Operations Manager (Senior Skipper)

**Mr. Chris Hubbard**

- Manage all aspects of the Authority's vessels' operations
- Marine operations budget management
- Master on the Authority's vessels
- Manage crew during marine operations

### Conservation & Research Managers (Job Share)

**Dr Jen Lewis** PhD. MRes. BSc.
and **Dr George Balchin** PhD. MRes. BSc.

- Team lead into SMT on conservation and research activities
- Support and assist the SMT and Authority in the development of MPA policy and management
- Participate and facilitate community meetings in respect to Marine Protected Area management
- Participate in the research & environmental activities in support of MPAs and other marine management functions

### Senior Research Officer

**Dr George Balchin** PhD. MRes. BSc.
and **Dr Sol Lucas** PhD. MEng. BEng

- Support development of the Authority's Annual Research Plan
- Design and inform the methodology of research projects undertaken by the Authority
- Implement the practical aspects of the Authority's research projects as identified in the annual Research Plan
- Support the development of research partnerships with other organisations
- Operational support for vessel and research activities

### Senior Fisheries and Conservation Officer (Operations, Intelligence and Investigation)

**Dr Alberto Kavadellas** PhD. B.Sc.

- Lead on operational compliance activities & risk-based enforcement
- Operational support for vessel and research activities
- Lead on compliance activities in the field

### Senior Fisheries and Conservation Officer (Skipper)

**Mr. James Tapley** B.Sc.

- Act as Deputy to the Vessel Operations Manager (Senior Skipper)
- Supervise crew members of the vessel in the delivery of marine operations and research support
- Act as designated helm on the Authority's RIBs and Lead Navigator and Radar Operator
- Conduct fisheries and conservation compliance and enforcement activities in accordance with risk-based enforcement process

### Marine Technician

**Mr. Andrew McCallum**

- Manage the Authority's workshop facilities
- Maintain the Authority's patrol vessels and ancillary equipment

### Fisheries and Conservation Officer (Enhanced)

**Ms. Vanessa Simons** M.Sci. MRes. B.Sc.

- Conduct and coordinate fisheries and conservation research activities in accordance with the conservation and research plan
- Carry out fisheries compliance activities in support of the compliance and enforcement team
- Facilitate consultation and dialogue with relevant stakeholders and permit holders
- Operational support for vessel and research activities

### Fisheries and Conservation Officers (Research) (x2)

**Mx. Em Denton-Smith** MRes. B.Sc.
and **Mr Dan Karparis** M.Sc. B.Sc.

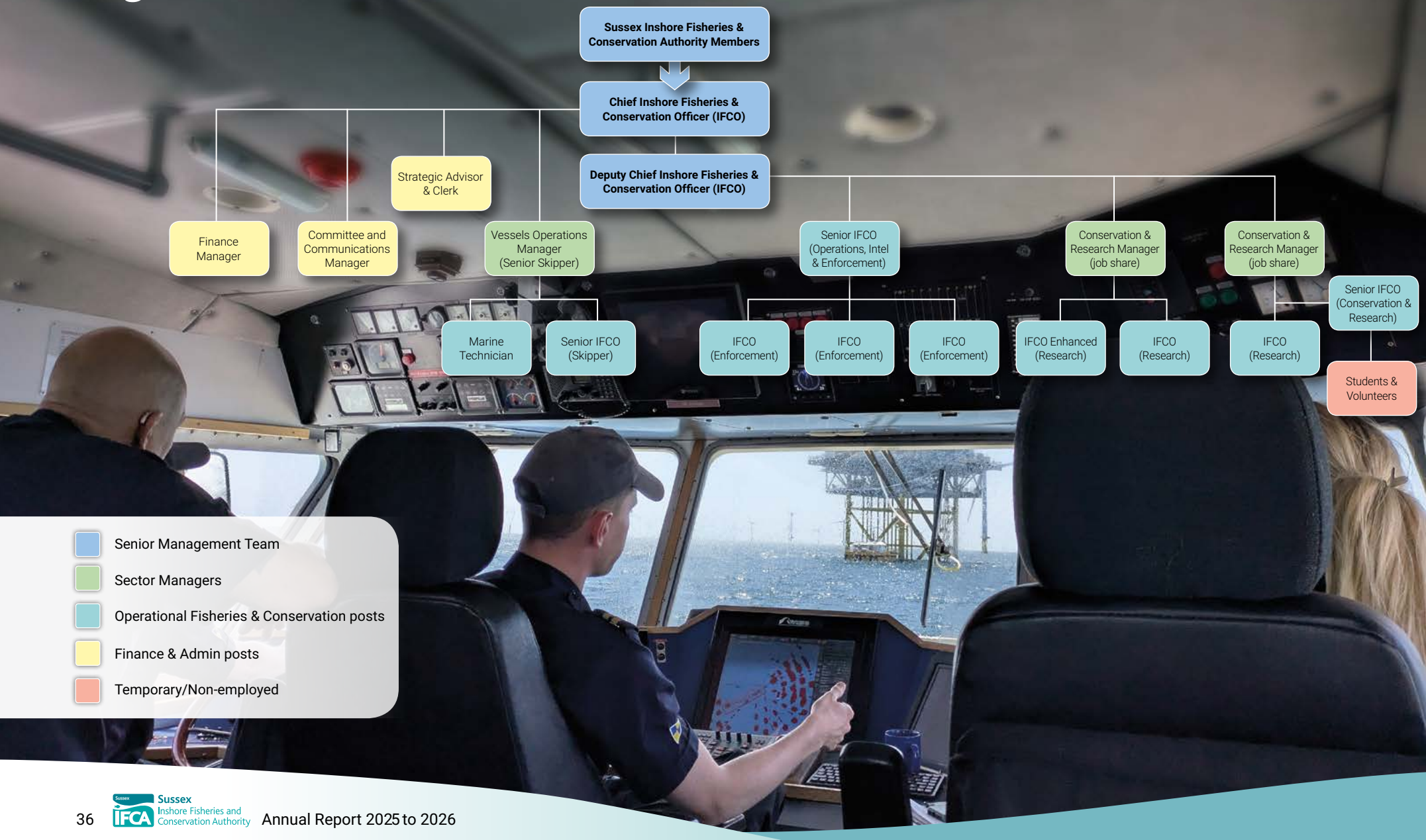
- Conduct fisheries and conservation research activities in accordance with the conservation and research plan
- Carry out fisheries compliance activities in support of the compliance and enforcement team
- Facilitate consultation and dialogue with relevant stakeholders
- Operational support for vessel and research activities

### Fisheries and Conservation Officers (x3)

**Mr. Jamie Milling** MRes. B.Sc., **Ms. Martha Webb** B.Sc.
and **Ms. Hannah Gibbs** M.Sci. B.Sc.

- Conduct fisheries and conservation compliance and enforcement activities in accordance with risk-based enforcement process
- Carry out fisheries research activities in support of the conservation and research team
- Facilitate consultation and dialogue with relevant stakeholders
- Operational support for vessel and research activities

# Sussex Inshore Fisheries & Conservation Authority Organisational Structure



# Governance

Sussex IFCA is a public body governed by a committee of 21 Members who provide oversight and strategic guidance for the Authority.

Seven Members are nominated by the Authority's three constituent councils: East Sussex County Council, West Sussex County Council, and Brighton and Hove City Council. Eleven Members are appointed by the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) from a range of stakeholder groups, each bringing skills and experience relevant to inshore fisheries management and marine conservation. In addition, there are three statutory Members representing the Marine Management Organisation, Environment Agency, and Natural England.

During the year, the Authority held four quarterly, in-person meetings of the Principal Committee in April, July, October and January at Sussex Yacht Club, Shoreham-by-Sea. Specialised subcommittee meetings were occasionally held at the Sussex IFCA office.

Authority meeting papers are prepared by the Senior Management Team with assistance from Sussex IFCA Officers. General Meetings are open to the public and press, with advance notice on the Authority website.

Proceedings are governed by the Authority Standing Orders with reference, where necessary, to the Members Code of Conduct. Minutes are promptly drafted, approved at the following quarterly meeting and then published on the Authority website.

The Finance Committee meet prior to each quarterly meeting, and outcomes are reported upon by the Chief Officer and Finance Manager in subsequent General Meetings.

The Authority also operates several subcommittees, including a Technical Subcommittee. They convene as required to provide guidance and recommendations on specific issues or workstreams, the outcomes of which are presented to the Principal Committee at General Meetings.

In line with the Terms and Conditions of IFCA General Membership, as set out by the Marine Management Organisation, annual Member Appraisals are conducted to assess the contributions of MMO appointees to the IFCA's work. These appraisals also consider adherence to the NOLAN principles and the quality of community representation. Additionally, they serve as a valuable opportunity for providing feedback to both the Chief Officer and the Chair. All Member Appraisals were completed by March 2026. In April 2025, an active commercial fisher was recruited to replace a member that had resigned the previous December. Also in April, one MMO appointee from the recreational fishing sector resigned from their position following ten years of service to the Authority. A new member with appropriate recreational sector experience was appointed by the MMO Governance team for the October meeting. At the same meeting a further member with experience and knowledge of the commercial fishing sector was recruited to the committee. A list of current members, with short biographies explaining their experience and interest, is published on the Sussex IFCA website.

Sussex IFCA acknowledges and values the significant time, expertise, and effort contributed by its Members. General Members appointed by the MMO, volunteer their time and provide their skills and dedication free of charge for the benefit of the public. This represents their commitment to the work of Sussex IFCA, the recognition of the benefits the co-management approach brings to inshore fisheries management and the desire to see the Authority work towards its published vision.



# Sussex IFCA Committee Members Attendance

| Key | |
|---|---|
| ✔ | Attended |
| A | Apologies for absence |
| X | Did not attend – no apologies |
| NA | Not yet appointed |
| – | Appointment ceased |
| * | Chair |
| ** | Deputy Chair |

| Appointment Type | Member | Quarterly Committee Meetings 2025/26 | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Apr-25 | Jul-25 | Oct-25 | Jan-26 |
| East Sussex County Council | **Cllr Sam Adeniji** (East Sussex County Council) | X | X | X | X |
| | **Cllr Julia Hilton** (East Sussex County Council) | ✔ | – | – | – |
| | **Cllr Tom Liddiard** (East Sussex County Council) | X | X | X | ✔ |
| | **Cllr Steve Murphy** (East Sussex County Council) | NA | NA | ✔ | A |
| West Sussex County Council | ** **Cllr Noel Atkins** (West Sussex County Council) | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ |
| | **Cllr Deborah Urquhart** (West Sussex County Council) | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ |
| | **Cllr Emma Evans** (West Sussex County Council) | X | X | X | X |
| Brighton & Hove City Council | **Cllr Theresa Fowler** (Brighton & Hove City Council) | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ |
| MMO Appointees | * ***Prof Peter Jones*** (Professor of Environmental Governance) | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ |
| | ***Graham Furness*** (Recreational Sea Angling) | ✔ | – | – | – |
| | ***Prof Paul Leonard*** (Environmental Consultant) | ✔ | A | ✔ | ✔ |
| | ***Danni Barratt*** (Natural England Representative) | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | – |
| | ***Louise Hutchby*** (Natural England Representative) | NA | NA | NA | ✔ |
| | ***Paul Johnson*** (Marine Managemant Organisation Representative) | ✔ | – | – | – |
| | ***Gordon Chittenden*** (Marine Management Organisation Representative) | NA | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ |
| | ***Mark Bennett*** (Environment Agency Representative) | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ |
| | ***Garry Walker*** (Commercial Fishing) | X | A | X | – |
| | **Sally Ashby** (Expert in Marine Ecosystems & Documentary Film Production) | ✔ | A | A | ✔ |
| | **Dr Corina Ciocan** (Principal Lecturer, University of Brighton) | ✔ | A | ✔ | A |
| | **Dr Paul Driver** (Fisheries Research & International Environmental Conservation) | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ |
| | **Gary Edwards** (Commercial Fishing/Recreational Charter Skipper) | X | ✔ | A | ✔ |
| | **Julian Seaman** (Harbour Master – Shoreham Port) | ✔ | ✔ | A | ✔ |
| | **Kim Matthews** (Commercial Fishing/Author/Lecturer) | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ |
| | ***Shaun Brewer*** (Commercial Fishing) | ✔ | A | ✔ | ✔ |
| | ***Paul Johnson*** (Recreational Fishing) | NA | NA | ✔ | ✔ |
| | **Yasmin Ornsby** (Commercial Fishing Representative) | NA | NA | ✔ | ✔ |

# Risk Management Strategy

In accordance with good management practice and government guidance, the Authority produces an annual risk strategy. The strategy is published within the Authority's Annual Plan, and its contents are under constant review by the Senior Management Team who report on risks to the Authority through the governance structure. The strategy takes the form of a risk matrix which is a 'live' document that develops as the Authority increasingly understands future work, this may in turn lead to deployment of organisational resources, the reallocation of resources and the development of capabilities.

Government reporting guidance requires that new risks identified for intervention should be highlighted in the Authority's Annual Report. A fully reviewed risk matrix is incorporated into the Annual Plan.

A tabulated summary of new and priority risks and interventions is provided for information.

| New or Priority Risk Description | Intended Intervention 2025 to 2026 | Residual Risk |
|---|---|---|
| **Failure to retain/recruit staff due to pressures associated with inflationary/living costs** | ▸ Continue with flexible and hybrid working arrangements adopted in 2020.<br>▸ Managers support and motivate staff, management through regular 1-2-1's and Individual Performance Plans.<br>▸ Salaries reviewed through benchmarking process to best ensure competitiveness.<br>▸ Support staff professional and personal development though providing opportunities including, internal/external training, professional membership, chartership.<br>▸ Maintain modern employment terms and conditions that promote effective service delivery. | Small organisation so internal progression limited.<br>Salaries perceived as uncompetitive with larger organisations or private sector.<br>Cost of living factors, e.g. locally high housing costs in SE England. |
| **Unable to meet new Sussex IFCA duties & high-level objectives** | ▸ Continue to provide best available evidence to Defra and local government to secure future funding. Support the AIFCA in efforts to communicate needs to Defra and other relevant departments.<br>▸ Maintain and develop IFCA/Defra standard MPA reporting processes that highlight level of risk and actions required for delivery of MPA network e.g., provision of evidence and conservation advice to enable development of effective management.<br>▸ Seek to develop MPA related research initiatives in partnership with relevant statutory bodies, marine industry sector and wider community. Support Sussex Natural Capital Strategy.<br>▸ Ensure continual development of all staff and engage with national training initiatives.<br>▸ Seek to develop joint working with the Marine Management Organisation and other relevant organisations.<br>▸ Support IFCA Chief Officer Group and National Enforcement Group to develop strategic shared approaches to training, intelligence, MCSS development and fisheries data acquisition to support local management needs.<br>▸ Continually evaluate and accommodate administrative implications of managing paid permit schemes for shellfish management. | Possibility that although progress will have been made Sussex IFCA could fail to fully meet all its new objectives.<br>That defined objectives are impacted upon by external factors beyond management control.<br>Potential for new/developing work streams that contribute to delivery of core duties require resource allocation in excess of what is available or currently funded.<br>Potential for data or information required to assess our delivery of core objectives but delivered by third parties, such as MPA condition assessments, is not available to us. |

## **Risk Management Strategy** continued:

| New or Priority Risk Description | Intended Intervention 2025 to 2026 | Residual Risk |
|---|---|---|
| **Failure to maintain effective financial management and control** | ▶ Continue to develop financial management systems and opportunities for administration efficiencies.<br>▶ Increase role of financial support in the development and support of project work.<br>▶ Robust processes and separate bank account for the management of paid permit schemes for shellfish and oyster management.<br>▶ Following changes to Audit Commission oversight maintain external independent auditing processes that report to Chief Financial Officer & Authority.<br>▶ Annual independent financial examination and internal audit and reporting process conducted by independent accountants.<br>▶ Maintain detailed reporting and required approval with Finance subcommittee on budgetary and key financial matters.<br>▶ Adoption of management accounts that include deprecation, prepayments, accruals to ensure effective annual and quarterly budget management of income and expenditure.<br>▶ Maintain financial planning on a four year cycle to inform constituent authorities of planned annual levies.<br>▶ In event of future Finance Manager change utilise agency recruitment process to minimise period and ensure adequate handover. | Negligible scope for large scale fraud or corruption.<br>Small scale misuse of resources is still possible.<br>Risks associated with the Sussex local government reorganisation could impact current funding model for the Authority. |
| **Failure of vessel assets** | ▶ Implementation of ten year operating and service plan for Watchful. Adopt and maintain Sea Flux vessel monitoring and maintenance software programme.<br>▶ Develop opportunities for Watchful and Merlin to undertake income related activities that support a sustainable Sussex marine environment. Look at strengthening further relationships with MMO, Environment Agency and Academic institutions.<br>▶ Vessel capital expenditure and depreciation to be fully accounted through balance sheet deductions.<br>▶ Appropriate valuation of marine assets to ensure adequate depreciation figure.<br>▶ Keep insurance under review and maintain mechanical insurance for significant unanticipated maintenance. | Unforeseen events may still cause disruption to activities.<br>Multiple simultaneous failures of available vessels. |
| **Failure to effectively monitor and enforce legislation** | ▶ Maintain risk-based compliance register and associated policies and procedures. Adopt recently agreed national IFCA Enforcement Strategy and Framework.<br>▶ As far as possible develop and use shared intelligence tools and processes with national partner MMO and fully engage with National Intelligence model.<br>▶ Continue to maintain and develop collaborative MMO/EA/NE/IFCA approaches toward compliance, including through local relationships and Tactical Co-ordination Group.<br>▶ Encourage personal development, engage in national training initiatives, accredited compliance training schemes and appoint relevant training leads as required.<br>▶ Assign specific officer to RSA related liaison/communications to minimise compliance risks in sector.<br>▶ Production of detailed guidance on all new Byelaw regulations, code of conducts, and communicate broadly over channels available to us, including social media. | Full time District coverage is not possible to achieve.<br>Small minority of fishermen will continue to breach legislation due to short term gain.<br>Lack of financial deterrent.<br>Some legislation difficult to enforce effectively. |
| **Failure to maintain survey / sampling programme** | ▶ Seek opportunities to run surveys/programmes through further partnership projects and the use of volunteers and student placements.<br>▶ If available secure capital grants for research equipment.<br>▶ Optimise use of IFCA shared research equipment assets.<br>▶ Seek to develop opportunities for studentships and placements with Brighton & Sussex Universities.<br>▶ Prioritise key research and ensure new projects are achievable in the context of existing research plans.<br>▶ Maintain an adequate research budget.<br>▶ Optimise availability of survey vessels by scheduling maintenance periods outside of peak survey season. | Planned surveys lost due to poor weather or vessel breakdown.<br>Research program continues to expand year on year.<br>Additional unanticipated requirements for surveys. |
| **Failure to fully engage with stakeholders** | ▶ Ensure a co-development approach is fully adopted for the consideration and development of MCZ and fisheries regulation introduction. Where necessary, support with additional stakeholder meetings to refine management measures. Ensure engagement is two-way, with outcomes fed-back to stakeholders to enable them to understand how their contribution has been considered.<br>▶ Develop appropriate communications for both informal and formal consultations in respect to the making of reviewed management byelaws.<br>▶ Maintain a communication plan that is regularly reviewed. Increase digital footprint and adopt social media communication channels, on top of existing, effective engagement. | Engagement affected by factors outside of IFCA control such as 'consultation fatigue'.<br>Some stakeholders unable or unwilling to engage with some forms of media or communications. |

# Service Plan & Performance Standards

To ensure Sussex IFCA works to a high standard and level of customer service, the Authority has developed and published our 'Service Plan and Performance Standards'. The Service Plan enables stakeholders, customers and the wider public to clearly understand the level of service they should expect, including how we will handle complaints.

Our Service Plan and Performance Standards, alongside other planning commitments, contribute towards the Authority delivering those high-level objectives defined in central government guidance provided to IFCAs, concerning their service delivery.

The Service Plan is subject to review and reflects the specific needs of those the Authority serves. These include individuals involved in the marine fishing and food sector, among other stakeholders.

We are committed to being a transparent and accountable organisation, we want you to know what you can expect from us and the level of service we will provide.

## Our Promise

The six-point promise shows what you can expect from us.

1. We will be polite and respectful in all our dealings with you.
2. We will respond to you via the communication channel that you specify whenever we can (in person, the telephone, by email or letter).
3. We will serve you in a timely manner.
4. We will own your enquiry by taking responsibility for resolving it.
5. We will listen to your point of view.
6. We will provide you with accurate information that you can rely on.

## Sussex IFCA's Service Plan includes the following topics:

- Practical ways of working to maintain our commitments
- The staff
- Where we operate
- Complaints and compliments: Sussex IFCA's commitment
- How do I make a complaint?
- What if I'm not satisfied?
- How do I give feedback or provide comments on Sussex IFCA's work?

Our Service Plan and Performance Standards document can be found on our website, please follow this link:
**https://www.sussex-ifca.gov.uk/about-us**

**Complaint Reporting**

Our Service Plan was reviewed in 2025 to ensure consistency with best practice in handling complaints, an action that arose as a result of the 2018 – 2022 IFCA Conduct and Operations report. In line with this review and best practice, Sussex IFCA have committed to reporting on formal complaints.

In the **2025 – 2026** reporting period Sussex IFCA received one formal complaint, relating to the management of seals.

# Access to Information

We are committed to developing and promoting a culture of openness, transparency and accountability as embodied in the various access to information legislation. As such, Sussex IFCA has a published policy on how we will respond to data requests under the Freedom of Information Act, Environmental Information Regulations and the Data Protection Act, with guidance on how to make data or information requests, and our published schedule of charges.

This information can be viewed on the **Data Sharing** page of the Sussex IFCA website.
**https://www.sussex-ifca.gov.uk/data-sharing**



# Abbreviations & Acronyms

| | |
|---|---|
| ***AAT*** | Association of Accounting Technicians |
| ***AIFCA*** | Association of Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities |
| ***AIS*** | Automatic Identification System |
| ***AL*** | Advisory Letter |
| ***BHCC*** | Brighton and Hove City Council |
| ***BRUVs*** | Baited Remote Underwater Videos |
| ***CEFAS*** | Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science |
| ***CFP*** | Common Fisheries Policy |
| ***CHASM*** | Crustacean Habitats and Sediment Movement |
| ***COG*** | Chief Officer's Group |
| ***CPUE*** | Catch Per Unit Effort |
| ***CZM*** | Coastal Zone Management |
| ***Defra*** | Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs |
| ***EA*** | Environment Agency |
| ***EIA*** | Environmental Impact Assessment |
| ***EIR*** | Environmental Information Regulations |
| ***EMS*** | European Marine Site |
| ***ENG1*** | Seafarer Medical Certificate |
| ***ESCC*** | East Sussex County Council |
| ***FAP*** | Financial Administrative Penalty |
| ***FMP*** | Fisheries Management Plan(s) |
| ***FO*** | Fishery Officer |
| ***FOI*** | Freedom of Information |
| ***FPV*** | Fishery Patrol Vessel |
| ***FV*** | Fishing Vessel |
| ***GDPR*** | General Data Protection Regulation |
| ***GIS*** | Geographical Information System |
| ***CLUE*** | Intelligence and case management system |
| ***GMDSS*** | Global Maritime Distress and Safety System |
| ***GPS*** | Global Positioning System |
| ***HAT*** | Highest Astronomical Tide |
| ***HLO*** | High Level Objective |
| ***HRA*** | Habitats Regulations Assessment |
| ***IA*** | Impact Assessment |
| ***iVMS*** | Inshore Vessel Monitoring System |
| ***ICES*** | International Council for the Exploration of the Sea |
| ***IFCA*** | Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority |
| ***IFCO*** | Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Officer |
| ***IFM*** | Institute of Fisheries Management |
| ***IR*** | Intelligence Report(s) |
| ***IUCN*** | International Union for Conservation of Nature |
| ***LAT*** | Lowest Astronomical Tide |
| ***MaCAA*** | Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 |
| ***MCA*** | Maritime and Coastguard Agency |
| ***MCRS*** | Marine Conservation Reference Size |
| ***MCZ*** | Marine Conservation Zone |
| ***MEDIN*** | Marine Environmental Data and Information |
| ***MEO*** | Marine Enforcement Officer |
| ***MHWS*** | Mean High Water Springs |
| ***MLWS*** | Mean Low Water Springs |
| ***MMO*** | Marine Management Organisation |
| ***MoU*** | Memorandum of Understanding |
| ***MPA*** | Marine Protected Area |
| ***MSY*** | Maximum Sustainable Yield |
| ***NE*** | Natural England |
| ***NGOs*** | Non-Governmental Organisations |
| ***NIMEG*** | National Inshore Marine Enforcement Group |
| ***OWW*** | Official Written Warning |
| ***PLN*** | Port, Letters, Numbers |
| ***REM*** | Remote Electronic Monitoring |
| ***RIB*** | Rigid Inflatable Boat |
| ***ROV*** | Remotely Operated Vehicle |
| ***RSA*** | Recreational Sea Angling |
| ***SAC*** | Special Area of Conservation |
| ***SC*** | Success Criteria |
| ***SFP*** | Shellfish Permit |
| ***SFS*** | Small Fish Survey(s) |
| ***SKRP*** | Sussex Kelp Restoration Project |
| ***SLA*** | Service Level Agreement |
| ***SMaCF*** | Sussex Marine and Coastal Forum |
| ***SPA*** | Special Protection Area |
| ***SSP*** | Solent Seascape Project |
| ***SSSI*** | Site of Special Scientific Interest |
| ***STCW*** | Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping |
| ***SUA*** | Small Unmanned Aircraft |
| ***SWT*** | Sussex Wildlife Trust |
| ***SxIFCA*** | Sussex IFCA |
| ***TAG*** | Technical Advisory Group |
| ***TCG*** | Tasking and Co-ordination Group |
| ***TVS*** | Towed Video Survey(s) |
| ***UAV*** | Unmanned Aerial Vehicle |
| ***VMS*** | Vessel Monitoring System |
| ***VW*** | Verbal Warning |
| ***WSCC*** | West Sussex County Council |
| ***WWG*** | Whelk Working Group |



# Abbreviations & Glossary

## Policy & Legislation

**Birds Directive**
Aims to protect all European wild birds and the habitats of the species listed in the directive. The Birds Directive is the abbreviated term for Council Directive 2009/147/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 November 2009 on the conservation of wild birds.

**Byelaw**
A regulation made by a local authority.

**Common Fisheries Policy (CFP)**
Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) is the fisheries policy of the European Union (EU). It sets quotas which indicate how much of each fish species each member state is allowed to catch, as well as encouraging the fishing industry by various market interventions.

**Fisheries Act 2020**
An Act to make provision in relation to fisheries, fishing, aquaculture and marine conservation; to make provision about the functions of the Marine Management Organisation; and for connected purposes. The Act gives the UK full control of its fishing waters for the first time since 1973.

**Fisheries Management Plans (FMPs)**
FMPs are evidence-based action plans, developed in collaboration with the fishing sector and other stakeholders. Their purpose is to deliver sustainable fisheries for current and future generations.

**Habitats Directive**
Aims to protect the habitats and species listed in the Directive's Annexes. The Habitats Directive is the abbreviated term for Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora.

**Habitats Regulations**
Transposes the Birds Directive and Habitats Directive into UK law.

**Joint Fisheries Statement (JFS)**
The JFS sets out the policies for achieving the 8 fisheries objectives in the Fisheries Act 2020. It will ensure we deliver a thriving, sustainable fishing industry and healthy marine environment. The JFS enables the UK fisheries policy authorities to develop Fisheries Management Plans (FMPs) to help deliver our ambition for sustainable fisheries.

**Marine and Coastal Access Act**
Seeks to improve management and increase protection for the marine environment within English inshore areas. The Act includes provisions for the establishment of the MMO, IFCAs and the creation of a network of MCZs.

**SxIFCA Byelaws**
A set of regulations enforced by SxIFCA within the SxIFCA district.

**Statutory Instruments**
This legislation is made in accordance with provisions contained within one or more of the UK primary fisheries Acts.

## Marine Protected Areas

**Appropriate Assessment**
The process and documentation associated with the statutory requirement under the EC Habitats Directive to assess the impact of a plan or project on a European site.

**Conservation Objective**
The goal of maintaining or restoring natural habitats and populations of species of wild fauna and flora at a favourable conservation status.

**European Marine Site**
A European site (SAC or SPA) which consists of marine areas.

**European Site**
A Special Protection Area (SPA) designated under the EC Birds Directive, or a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) designated under the EC Habitats Directive.

**Favourable Condition**
A range of conditions for a natural habitat or species at which the sum of the influences acting upon that habitat or species are not adversely affecting its distribution, abundance, structure or function within an individual Natura 2000 site in the long term. The condition in which the habitat or species is capable of sustaining itself on a long-term basis.

**Feature**
A natural or semi-natural feature for which a European site has been selected.

**Habitat**
The place in which an animal or plant lives.

Habitat Regulations Assessment
An assessment required under the EC Habitats Directive of the impacts of plans or projects on European sites.

**Implementation**
Putting policies and proposals into effect.

**Likely Significant Effect (LSE)**
The first step of a Habitat Regulations Assessment to determine whether a plan or project might impact a European site.

**Maintain**
The action required for an interest feature when it is considered to be in favourable condition. Management may still be required to keep this status.

**Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ)**
Marine areas in English waters designated under the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 to protect marine habitats and species typical of UK waters.

**Marine Protected Area**
A marine area that is protected by statutory or voluntary measures to control human activity. The term is also used to describe Scotland's national network of marine nature conservation sites.

**Ramsar Site**
A site held on the list of wetlands of international importance, especially as habitats for wildfowl, under the Ramsar convention.

**Relevant Authority**
The specific competent authority which has powers or functions which have, or could have, an impact on the marine environment within or adjacent to a European marine site.

**Restore**
The action required for bringing a qualifying feature back to favourable condition.

**Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)**
Areas designated in the UK for their internationally important flora, fauna and geological features.

**Special Area of Conservation (SAC)**
An area designated under the European Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC.

**Special Protection Area (SPA)**
An area designated under the European Birds Directive 79/409/EEC.

**Steering Group**
A group of statutory and non-governmental organisations with delegated powers from the Management Group. The Steering Group oversees the work of the Implementation Officer.

**Sub-Feature**
An important component part of a qualifying feature – e.g. kelp forests are a sub-feature of the rocky reef.

## Other/Fisheries & Environmental

**Berried Crab/Lobster**
A crab or lobster with eggs or spawn attached to the tail or other exterior part.

**Bycatch**
A fish or other marine species that is caught unintentionally while catching target species.

**Carapace Length**
The carapace length of a lobster is measured from the rear of the eye socket to the rear of the carapace on a line parallel to the centre line of the body.

**Carapace Width**
The carapace width of a crab is measured from the widest part of a crab's carapace.

**Crustacea**
A group of arthropods, which includes crabs, lobsters, crayfish and shrimp.

**Discards**
Those components of a fish stock thrown back after capture e.g. because they are below the minimum landing size or because quota has been exhausted for that species.

**Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)**
The assessment of environmental effects of major projects and development proposals to inform decision making. EIA is a European requirement.

**Escape Gaps**
An opening in the pot of a size that allows undersized target and non-target species to escape, whilst retaining legal sized target species.

**Geographic Information System (GIS)**
A system which captures, stores, analyses, manages and presents data that is linked to a location. The software ArcGIS is used by SxIFCA to produce maps.

**Landing Obligation**
Under the landing obligation all catches have to be kept on board, landed and counted against quotas. Undersized fish cannot be marketed for human consumption.

**Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY)**
MSY is the largest average yield (catch) that can theoretically be taken from a species' stock over an indefinite period under constant environmental conditions.

**Minimum Conservation Reference Size (MCRS)**
The size for a given species below which the sale of catches shall be restricted to reduction to fish-meal, pet food or other non-human consumption products only.

## **Glossary** continued:

**Minimum Landing Size (MLS)**
The EU Common Fisheries Policy implemented EU minimum landing sizes (MLS) now known as Conservation Reference Sizes (CRS) for quota species which define the smallest fish measurement at which it is legal to keep or sell a fish.

**Mitigation**
The action of reducing the severity or seriousness of something.

**Stakeholder**
Any organisation or individual that has a direct interest in actions or decisions. Their interest may be because they will have a role in implementing the decisions, or because they will be affected by the decision.

**Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)**
Assesses the impact on the environment from public plans, programmes and strategies.

**Sustainability**
The collection of policies and strategies employed by companies to minimize their environmental impact on future generations.

### Enforcement

**Automatic Identification System (AIS)**
An automatic tracking system used on ships and by vessel traffic services (VTS) for identifying and locating vessels by electronically exchanging data with other nearby ships, AIS base stations, and satellites.

**Code of Conduct**
A set of rules outlining the social norms and rules and responsibilities of, or proper practices for, an individual, party or organization.

**Global Positioning System (GPS)**
A satellite-based navigation system.

**Inshore Vessel Monitoring System (I-VMS)**
I-VMS devices are similar to the VMS tracking devices used by fishing vessels of 12 metres and greater. I-VMS devices, using GPRS monitor inshore fishing activity to help improve the management and sustainability of our marine environment, ensure proper fishing practices and prevent illegal fishing to help protect and enhance the livelihoods of fishers.

**Landings**
The catches of marine fish landed at a port.

**Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)**
A formal agreement between two or more parties. MOUs are not legally binding.

**Nautical Mile (NM)**
A nautical mile is a unit of distance, set by international agreement as being 1.852 km; 1,852 m; 1.151 mi or 6,076 ft.

**Patrols**
Monitoring of a specific geographic area.

**Permit**
An official document giving someone authorisation to fish.

**Pot Limitation**
Limits the number of pots a permit holder can fish within the district.

**TCG**
Tactical Co-ordination Group.

**Vessel Monitoring System (VMS)**
Systems that are used in commercial fishing to allow environmental and fisheries regulatory organisations.

### Fishing Methods & Gear

**Bait Collection**
The collection of intertidal animals to use as bait.

**Bait Digging**
Method of collecting angling bait which uses a fork, pump or spade to target lugworm and ragworm living in intertidal sediment.

**Crab Tiling**
Collecting soft shelled shore crabs referred to as peeler crabs for use as angling bait. Shelters made from tyres or pipes are set on intertidal sediment.

**Dahn**
A pole with a float, weight and flag attached.

**Dredge**
A rigid structure towed on the seabed in order to collect target species.

**Drift Net**
Nets which hang vertically in the water column without being anchored to the bottom. The nets are kept vertical in the water by floats attached to a rope along the top of the net and weights attached to another rope along the bottom of the net.

**Fixed Engine**
A fixed (stationary) net used for the taking of fish.

**Gill Net**
A single wall of netting that can either be fixed or allowed to drift.

**Hand Gathering**
The process of gathering sea fisheries resources by hand for food or bait.

**Marker Buoy/Buff**
Any surface marker float which can be used to identify the location of fishing gear.

**Mobile Gear**
Any dredge, trawl or similar device that is designed to be towed or pushed to take sea fisheries resources on the seabed.

**Net**
Any trammel, gill, tangle or other enmeshing net used for the capturing of sea fish.

**Passive Gear**
Longlines or nets which are rigged with top, bottom and connecting ropes and may be equipped with anchoring, floating and navigational gear.

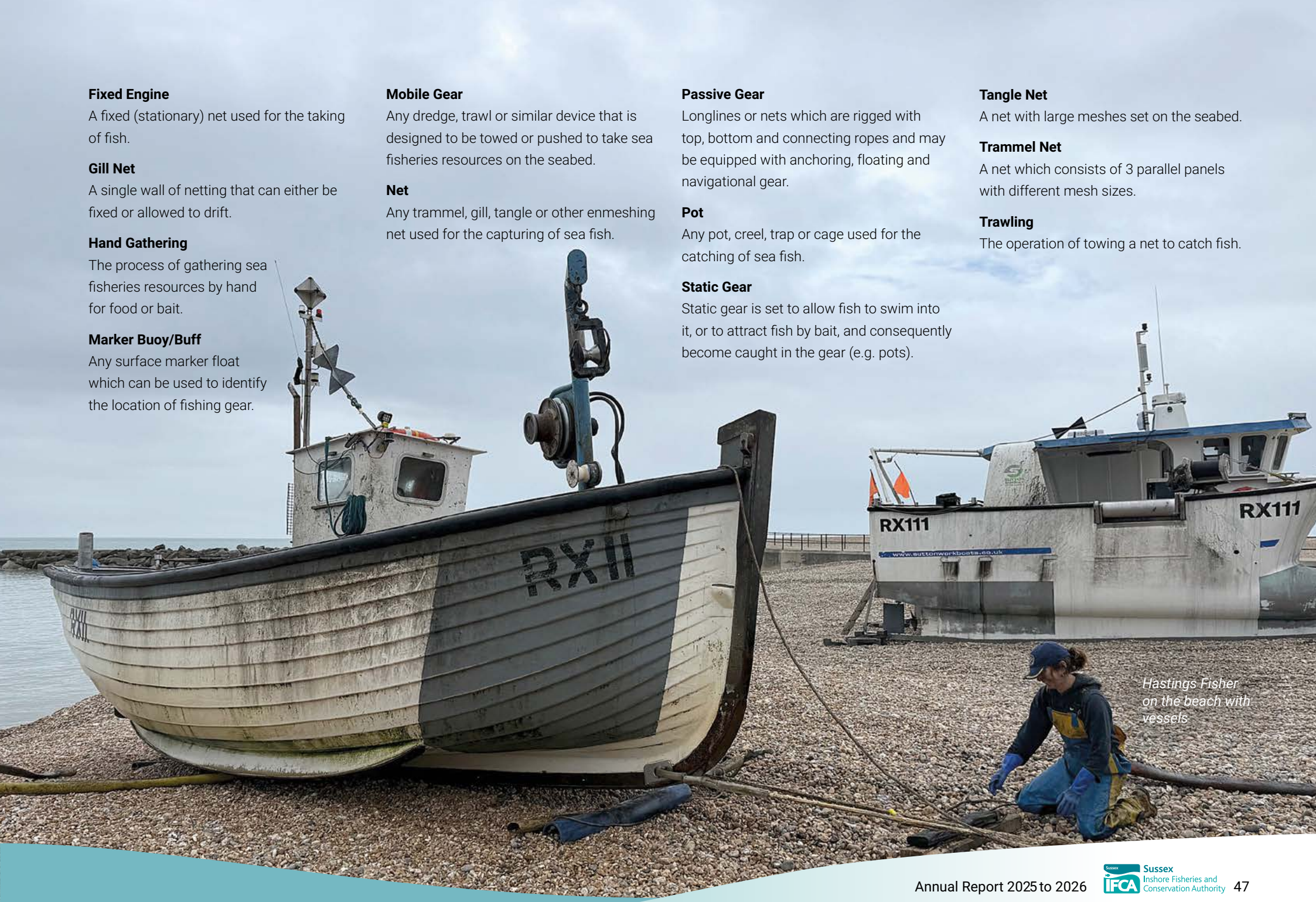
**Pot**
Any pot, creel, trap or cage used for the catching of sea fish.

**Static Gear**
Static gear is set to allow fish to swim into it, or to attract fish by bait, and consequently become caught in the gear (e.g. pots).

**Tangle Net**
A net with large meshes set on the seabed.

**Trammel Net**
A net which consists of 3 parallel panels with different mesh sizes.

**Trawling**
The operation of towing a net to catch fish.




*Hastings Fisher on the beach with vessels*

**Website:** www.sussex-ifca.gov.uk
**Email:** admin@sussex-ifca.gov.uk
**Permit Info:** database@sussex-ifca.gov.uk
**Call:** 01273 454407

**Twitter (X):** sussex_ifca
**Facebook:** SuIFCA
**Instagram:** sussex_ifca
**LinkedIn:** Sussex Inshore Fisheries & Conservation Authority

**Address:**
12A Riverside Business Centre
Brighton Road
Shoreham-by-Sea
West Sussex
BN43 6RE