

MEDIA RELEASE

Friday 24th January 2020

Creating Sustainable Fisheries: Sussex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority approves new Nearshore Trawling Byelaw

At a meeting of the Sussex Inshore Fisheries & Conservation Authority yesterday, members approved a proposed new Nearshore Trawling Byelaw.

The new fisheries management measures are specifically intended to help safeguard and develop sustainable inshore fisheries into the future. Those areas protected include an area extending 4km seaward between Shoreham-by-Sea and Selsey Bill. Historically, in the late 1980's this area was associated with large dense kelp beds that supported abundant marine life, including important commercial fish and shellfish species such as bass, sole, spawning black bream, lobsters and cuttlefish.

Much of the kelp is now absent so the biological productivity of the area is significantly diminished compared with several decades ago.

The proposed new trawling restrictions will also encompass the Marine Conservation Zone known as 'Selsey Bill & the Hounds' and will protect the conservation features for which it is designated.

The Authority's measures reflect an ecosystem approach toward fisheries management, recognising the importance of healthy marine habitats in supporting long term healthy commercial and recreational fisheries.

In addition to the intended fisheries benefits that should to be gained by enabling the kelp to recover to its former state, the Authority recognises that coastal kelp beds have a high value in respect to both carbon storage; so helping reduce climate change, as well as absorbing wave energy to potentially reduce coastal erosion and help flood management.

The proposed Byelaw will now be submitted to the Marine Management Organisation and Defra for the final steps of its approval and confirmation by the Secretary of State.

Sussex IFCA will be working with our partners and the community to raise awareness of the importance of marine habitat protection and its links to sustainable fisheries.

Chief Fisheries & Conservation Officer for the Authority, Tim Dapling comments:

‘The Authority has spent several years working toward this important decision. The byelaw and supporting evidence contained within the impact assessment will now be submitted to Defra for approval.

There has been considerable interest within Sussex and the wider marine community regarding this new management measure. This is a key step toward more sustainable fisheries and delivery of positive outcomes for all. Future work will include assessing kelp recovery and benefits to the inshore fishing community.’

Further information about Sussex IFCA

The Sussex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority (IFCA) was created in 2010. The Sussex IFCA is funded by East Sussex County Council, West Sussex County Council and Brighton and Hove City Council. The Sussex IFCA is tasked with the sustainable management of inshore sea fisheries resources within its District that extends 6 nautical miles seaward from the Sussex coastline.

If you would like to know more then please contact Sussex IFCA at admin@sussex-ifca.gov.uk, call 01273 454407

or visit our website www.sussex-ifca.gov.uk

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