

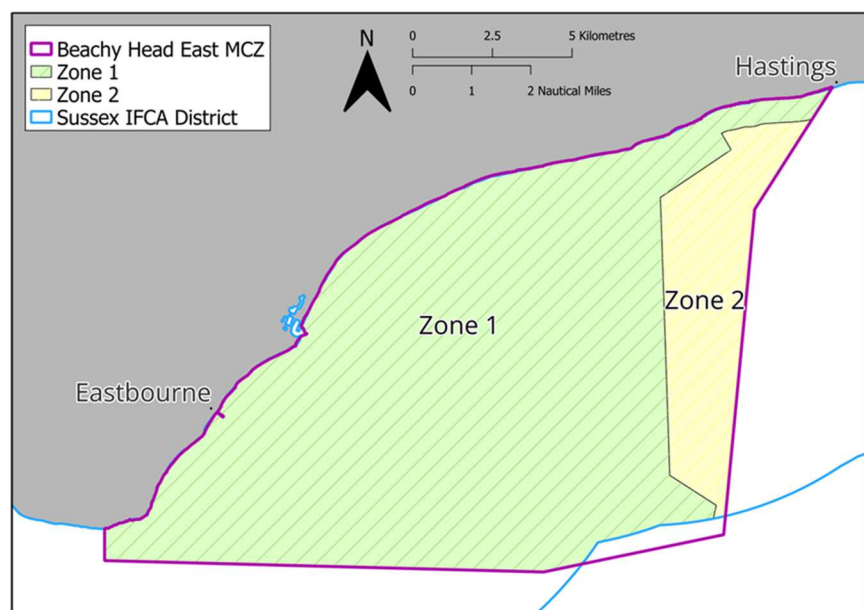
MEDIA RELEASE

17th April 2026

## Introduction of the Sussex IFCA Marine Protected Areas Byelaw 2023 Safeguarding Sussex's Marine Protected Areas

The Sussex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority is pleased to report that Beachy Head East Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ) will receive protection from potentially damaging fishing activity, helping to conserve some of the most valuable marine habitats within the Sussex District. The Marine Protected Areas Byelaw 2023 has been approved by the Secretary of State for the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs; Rt. Hon. Emma Reynolds MP. The new Byelaw introduces appropriate fisheries management for Beachy Head East Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ), the final MCZ in the Sussex district requiring the introduction of management after the site was designated by Defra in 2019.

The measures introduced under the new Byelaw result in towed fishing gears being excluded from 164km<sup>2</sup> of the site (Zone 1), protecting the species and habitats in this area sensitive to this type of fishing activity. Some access for towed gear is retained in the 28km<sup>2</sup> area of the site (Zone 2) where these sensitive features are not present. Low impact fishing techniques including static gear such as nets and pots, and rod and line fishing, will continue within the site, and Sussex IFCA have an ongoing commitment to monitor fishing activity and evaluate impacts.



The primary objective of the management has been to minimise interactions between designated features and the fishing activities they are likely to be harmed by. In this way, we can protect the sensitive features and deliver the conservation objectives of the site, whilst minimising disruption to important local fisheries.

Sussex IFCA have produced extensive guidance for stakeholders on the Marine Protected Areas Byelaw 2023. The Byelaw in full and further guidance, can be found on the Sussex IFCA web pages <https://www.sussex-ifca.gov.uk/regulations>.

### **Chief Fisheries and Conservation Officer for the Authority,**

Rob Pearson explains:

*'Whilst developing this Byelaw, the Authority was conscious of striking the delicate balance between ensuring the preservation and enhancement of our valuable marine habitats, whilst minimising impacts on our small scale inshore fishers, who are already under pressure from impacts including marine spatial squeeze. These new measures will protect the fantastic diversity of Beachy Head East MCZ, whilst still providing some fishing opportunity where we are confident it will not impact the conservation objectives of the site. Our approach reflects the Authorities vision to champion a sustainable marine environment and inshore fisheries within the District.'*

### **About Beachy Head East Marine Conservation Zone**

Beachy Head East MCZ is an inshore site that covers an area of 195 km<sup>2</sup>, located along the coast near Eastbourne in East Sussex, in the Eastern Channel region. This site became a Marine Conservation Zone in May 2019, meaning specific features within this area are protected and, where necessary, regulators will manage marine activities. The protected features within the site include subtidal chalk, littoral chalk communities, ross worm reefs (*Saballeria spinulosa*), short-snouted seahorse (*Hippocampus hippocampus*) and high and moderate energy circalittoral rock. More information on Beachy Head East MCZ can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/marine-conservation-zones-beachy-head-east>

## 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.

## Contact Details

If you would like to know more then please contact Sussex IFCA at [admin@sussex-ifca.gov.uk](mailto:admin@sussex-ifca.gov.uk), call 01273 454407 or visit our website [www.sussex-ifca.gov.uk](http://www.sussex-ifca.gov.uk)

## Key Contacts

Rob Pearson, Chief Fisheries and Conservation Officer:  
[r.pearson@sussex-ifca.gov.uk](mailto:r.pearson@sussex-ifca.gov.uk)

Angharad Purcell, Deputy Chief Fisheries and Conservation Officer:  
[a.purcell@sussex-ifca.gov.uk](mailto:a.purcell@sussex-ifca.gov.uk)

Sussex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority, 12A Riverside Business Centre, Brighton Road, Shoreham-by-Sea, West Sussex, BN43 6RE