

North Eastern  
Inshore Fisheries  
and Conservation  
Authority

# ANNUAL REPORT

2024/2025



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# FOREWORD

This report provides a summary account and review of North Eastern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority's (NEIFCA) main outputs and achievements between 1 April 2024 and 31 March 2025.

A highlight of the reporting year was observing the progression of the build of a new main vessel for NEIFCA following the award of contract to local, Whitby based, ship building firm, Parkol Marine Ltd in October 2023. By the end of March 2025 the construction phase was nearing completion and the new vessel was being prepared for painting.

Alongside the build of the new vessel the sale of the old vessel, North Eastern Guardian III (NEG III), was successfully concluded on 7 March 2025 to a maritime services company based in Poland. NEG III was delivered, under its own power, to its new owners in Poland, on 7 March 2025.

Outside vessel assets, significant progress was also made in terms of the development and progression of a number of key fisheries management byelaw regulations including shellfish management, trawling in the Humber Estuary and the regulation of beam trawling.

Finally, on 6 February 2025 NEIFCA welcomed the third Defra report into the Conduct and Operations of IFCAs and is currently working in partnership with Defra and the national Association of IFCAs to support the implementation of the associated recommendations.

**Professor Mike Elliott**

Chair of North Eastern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority (NEIFCA)







## NATIONAL VISION

“ To lead, champion and manage a sustainable marine environment and inshore fisheries by successfully securing the right balance between social, environmental and economic benefits to ensure healthy seas, sustainable fisheries and a viable industry. ”



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

NEIFCA was formally established on 1 April 2011 under provision contained within the 2009 Marine and Coastal Access Act. It replaced North Eastern Sea Fisheries Committee (NESFC), assuming new duties and responsibilities for managing the sustainable exploitation of sea fisheries resources within its district.

This Annual Report covers the period 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025. It provides a comprehensive review of its main outputs and achievements across key work areas including: Organisational; Legislative Enforcement; Environmental and Scientific Research; Staff training and development; Communications; Partnership working and additional work supporting the delivery of national work streams. The report also provides a summary of NEIFCA's performance and progress against both longstanding national and local working objectives.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY ACHIEVEMENTS

Main achievements and outputs during 2024/2025 included the following:

- 🐟 Agreement achieved with members on an uplifted, operational budget of £1,535,870 which included a phased increase in revenue funding to meet the projected costs of running the new main vessel from 1 April 2025.
- 🐟 Following the award of contract in October 2023 to Whitby based, Parkol Marine Ltd for the build and commission of a new main fisheries vessel, the project advanced successfully through 2024/2025. Under the management of the Deputy Chief Officer, Ian Davies, the construction phases were completed by the end of March 2025 and the vessel was being prepared for painting.
- 🐟 In combination with the progression of the build of the new main vessel, during 2024/2025, NEIFCA successfully marketed and sold its longstanding offshore asset, North Eastern Guardian III, which was delivered to it's new owners in Poland during March 2025.
- 🐟 By the end of March 2025 the majority of NEIFCA fishing permit holders were submitting both electronic applications for their permits and monthly catch and effort returns directly onto the system.
- 🐟 Following the completion of a comprehensive, independent internal audit covering the period 2024/2025 NEIFCA received a substantial assurance opinion. The highest category of assurance.
- 🐟 Significant progress was made on the development of new fisheries byelaw regulations during 2024/2025. On 25 February 2025 a new Humber Estuary fishing byelaw was submitted to Defra for formal confirmation. On 11 March 2025 a new beam trawling byelaw regulation was confirmed by Defra which will enhance the management of beam trawling throughout the NEIFCA district and on 14 March 2025 a new shellfish management byelaw entered the 5th stage of quality assurance with the Marine Management Organisation (MMO).
- 🐟 During 2024/2025 NEIFCA officers engaged extensively in the national Fisheries Management Plan (FMP) programme covering key stocks including king scallops, crabs and lobsters, sea bass and whelk through associated implementation working groups coordinated through the national Association of IFCAs and the national Chief Officers Group.



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY ACHIEVEMENTS CONTINUED

### Partnership Working

- NEIFCA retains a strong commitment to active partnership working and continues to build on that through active collaboration with the Marine Management Organisation (MMO), the Department for the Environment Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), the Seafish Industry Authority and the Centre for the Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (CEFAS). During 2024/2025 much of that work involved supporting the national development and implementation of Fisheries Management Plans (FMPS) a new statutory requirement of the 2020 Fisheries Act. With additional grant aid support, provided by Defra, NEIFCA was able to maintain its level of active involvement in the implementation phase of key FMPs through 2024/2025. This included regular attendance on national working groups such as those focused on crab and lobster and king scallop management. Throughout the year NEIFCA also made significant contributions to other FMP programmes including sea bass. Active engagement in FMP delivery is now a significant component of NEIFCA's national annual work programme.
- From an enforcement and compliance perspective NEIFCA maintained an active and collaborative working relationship with MMO colleagues which included attendance and participation in monthly joint Tasking and Coordination Group (TCG) meetings. These meetings enable the review of shared intelligence and the associated tasking of joint actions to tackle issues as they emerge and develop locally. Throughout 2024/2025 NEIFCA continued to share national fisheries intelligence and outcomes via the newly commissioned 'CLUE' system and information relating to fisheries inspections. This continues to enhance and strengthen NEIFCA's collaborative approach to enforcement and compliance work. During 2024/2025 NEIFCA Officers issued 25 verbal warnings, 1 written caution, 1 financial administrative penalty and a further 8 cases were formally prosecuted in local Magistrates Courts for non-compliance with local byelaw and national fisheries legislation.
- During 2024/2025 further joint working was undertaken in conjunction with the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority (GLAA), the Borders Agency and local policing and public protection teams in response to the illegal gathering of certain intertidal shellfish species within the Authority's district. Officers also worked actively with the Environment Agency (EA), policing intertidal netting activity along the coast and local marine policing units in support of more general fisheries enforcement and compliance work.



# North Eastern Guardian III

*Whitby Harbour 2019*





# INTRODUCTION

## Introduction

This 2024/2025 Annual Report provides a summary of NEIFCA's main outputs and achievements across Central policy, encompassing strategic development and legislative review; Legislative enforcement; Environmental and scientific research, encompassing fisheries stock assessment, marine survey and monitoring, data management, review of marine consents and licensing applications and marine habitat protection; Staff training and development; Communications and partnership working. The report complements NEIFCA's 2024/2025 Annual Plan and also provides a summary of progress against longstanding national IFCA success criteria and high-level objectives.

## Background

NEIFCA was established in October 2010 under provisions contained within the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009. On 1 April 2011, it assumed full statutory responsibility for managing the exploitation of sea fisheries resources within its jurisdiction. Since its inception it has drawn professional service provision including legal, financial and human resource support from its lead Local Authority member, East Riding of Yorkshire Council (ERYC). NEIFCA membership totals 30 and comprises of 13 elected councillors, representing 11 coastal local authorities together with 14 members appointed by the Marine Management Organisation and singular members representing Natural England, the Environment Agency and the Marine Management Organisation.

## Financial Overview

NEIFCA's total annual levy for the reporting period December 2023 was agreed by members during March at £1,535,870. The budget was allocated across four main areas:

### Corporate

Expenditure relating to corporate governance.

### Headquarter

The cost of management and administrative support.

### Operations

Direct expenditure incurred in the performance of the authority's objectives comprising of offshore, land-based and environmental activities.

### Grant aided projects

Projects which are specific or time bound and wholly funded by external sources.

**See table on Page 10**

# COMPREHENSIVE INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT

Income versus expenditure is summarised in the following tables covering the 2024/2025 financial year. The final budget outturn shows and underspend of £1,237,569 which included a capital receipt of £850K from the sale of North Eastern Guardian III combined with a number of compensating variances including: a planned hold on recruitment to two full time positions, revenue savings generated from the main vessel sale and additional income including external grant aid payments and more favourable banking interest rates. The savings generated through 2024/2025 were transferred to the vessel renewals fund and the external projects reserve.

2023/2024		2024/2025				
Net Expenditure		Expenditure	Income	Net Expenditure	Original Budget	Variance
£393,969	Central / Headquarters	£471,972	£94,719	£377,254	£455,820	£-78,566
£136,965	Land Based Operations	£151,178	£5,964	£145,213	£145,140	£73
£478,638	Offshore Operations	£540,678	£3,848	£536,830	£625,140	£-88,310
£111,072	Environment	£104,790	£4,500	£100,290	£146,100	£-45,730
£-81,528	Grand Aided Projects	£233,689	£382,821	£-149,133	£17,000	£-166,133
<b>£1,039,117</b>		<b>£1,502,307</b>	<b>£491,853</b>	<b>£1,010,454</b>	<b>£1,389,120</b>	<b>£-378,666</b>

Income	Sources of Finance	Expenditure	Income	Net Income	Original Budget	Variance
£1,377,465	Annual levy on Local Authorities	£0	£1,535,875	£1,535,875	£1,535,870	£-5
£58,497	Contribution from Reserves	£0	£64,588	£64,588	£55,690	£-8,898
£0	Contribution to / from Capital - Vehicles	£0	£850,000	£850,000	£0	£-850,000
£-112,900	Contribution to Earmarked Reserves	£202,440	£0	£-202,440	£-202,440	£0
<b>£1,323,062</b>		<b>£202,420</b>	<b>£2,450,463</b>	<b>£2,248,023</b>	<b>£1,389,120</b>	<b>£-858,903</b>



# NORTH EASTERN GUARDIAN III

*Fisheries Patrol*





# ORGANISATIONAL REVIEW 2024/2025

## Main Achievements

- During December 2023 members endorsed and set an operational budget of £1,389,120 for the 2024/2025 year. This included a phased uplift of 11% to support the projected financing and leasing costs associated with the new main vessel asset.

- Following the award of contract in October 2023 to Whitby based, Parkol Marine Ltd for the build and commission of a new main fisheries vessel, work commenced during February 2024. The first stage of the construction phase involved laying the keel through to the completion of the framing of the twin hulls in May 2024 and associated plating, including the main deck sections in July 2024 followed by the accommodation sections during September 2024.

Housing for the shafts and main engines was completed at the end of September 2024 and construction of the wheelhouse, the last section of the main superstructure, during October 2024. Internal 'fit out' commenced during November 2024 with the installation of pipework, cable runs and internal insulating layers.

Main engine installation was completed on 19 December 2024 alongside supporting ancillary equipment including tanks, pipework and deck machinery. External paintwork and fendering installation commenced during March 2025 and the vessel was lifted into the water on 8 May 2025.

The entire project has been very effectively managed both in terms of time and budget by the Deputy Chief Officer, Ian Davies.

- On 11 March 2025 a new fisheries management byelaw regulation was confirmed by Defra. Byelaw XXXIII Beam Trawling Byelaw 2024 replaced an emergency regulation made by NEIFCA on 17 July 2023. The new regulation enables the management of beam trawling via a number of conditions which are attached to a fishing permit. These conditions can then be varied to suit the needs of the fishery ensuring that associated activities remain sustainable. This is the first time that NEIFCA has implemented such a regulation and since confirmation five such permits have been issued.

- In other areas of regulatory development a new Humber fishing byelaw regulation was submitted to Defra for formal confirmation on 25 February 2025. Once confirmed, this regulation will extend the boundaries of a protected area within the Humber Estuary, designated to protect sea grass. The success of previous management interventions has led to an expansion of sea grass habitat beyond the boundaries of the current protected area.

Extensive work was also completed on the development of a new flexible shellfish permitting byelaw regulation which, amongst other things, will enable NEIFCA to more effectively manage both the number of vessels fishing commercially for shellfish and the number of pots worked within its district..

- Throughout 2024/2025 key NEIFCA staff have maintained very active engagement across the national Fisheries Management Plan (FMP) programme. Key plans of specific interest to NEIFCA include the crab and lobster, king scallop and sea bass. Involvement through 2024/2025 has included attending and actively contributing in implementation groups, providing timely data, information and advice when requested by Defra leads.
- In terms of supporting the delivery of other national marine workstreams NEIFCA also played an active role in Marine Protected Area (MPA) work through 2024/2025. This involved the timely provision of data, information and advice specific to MPA interactions in the NEIFCA district.



## CENTRAL POLICY 2024/2025

### **Central Policy and Strategic Development**

Central policy and strategic development is supported by two key internal sub-groups, the Executive Committee and the Science Advisory Group. The Science Advisory Group comprises of MMO appointees and representatives from Natural England, the Environment Agency and the MMO and is responsible for overseeing regulatory review, development and implementation, scientific and survey work, projects and licensing applications and consents. The Executive Committee comprises of elected and appointed MMO members and provides a smaller more focused decision making group to undertake any work delegated by the full authority, including ratifying emergency byelaw provisions and considering appeals against process. These groups work in tandem with recommendations passing through the Executive Committee for final endorsement by the full authority.

### **Risk Management**

The effective management of risk remains a key priority for officers and members of the authority. A formal strategy supporting the identification and management of risk was first agreed and adopted by members of the shadow authority on 25 January 2011. The strategy and its provisions are reviewed on an annual basis to ensure that it remains 'fit-for-purpose'.

Alongside the strategy, the identification and management of risk is supported through a number of risk registers covering both strategic and operational risk, including a risk-based enforcement matrix. All risk registers are subject to six-monthly review with updates reported to authority members and posted on the authority's website. During the reporting year, these reviews and updates were completed during March and September 2024.

### **Emergency IFCA Byelaws**

Section 157 of the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 provides a mechanism for IFCA's to introduce emergency byelaw regulations to deal with unforeseen issues requiring urgent action. Emergency byelaws are time limited to a maximum period of eighteen months. Since its inception in 2011, NEIFCA has effectively utilised its emergency byelaw making powers on six separate occasions. On 17 July 2023 NEIFCA confirmed an emergency byelaw to enable the effective management of an unforeseen emergent beam trawl fishery targeting King Scallop within its district. This enabled NEIFCA to control the numbers of vessels accessing the fishery, set fishing conditions and in combination with existing byelaw regulations, gather information on the fishery to inform future management. The emergency byelaw was replaced on 11 March 2025 with a permanent fisheries regulation which has since been fully implemented.



## LEGISLATIVE ENFORCEMENT

Legislative enforcement forms a key element of the authority's drive to achieve the sustainable management of sea fisheries resources within its district. Enforcement is undertaken by fourteen warranted Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Officers (IFCOs) who are responsible for monitoring and inspecting fisheries activities, both offshore and along the coast. Enforcement work is now supported by a dedicated 26 metre catamaran, North Eastern Guardian IV (NEG IV), which will carry a 6.4 metre rigid inflatable boat (RIB) to facilitate the boarding and inspection of fishing vessels at sea alongside a 9.5 metre cabin RIB to support its offshore operations.

During the 2024/2025 reporting period NEIFCA's long standing main vessel asset, North Eastern Guadian III (NEG III), was withdrawn from service and prepared for sale. The sale process was concluded during March 2025 and the vessel was delivered to its new owners in Poland.

## ENFORCEMENT OUTPUTS 2024/2025

Enforcement Output	Frequency
Vessel inspections	245
Vessel observations	426
Inspection reports completed	353
Verbal warnings	25
Written warnings	1
Offences reported	17
Formal cautions	1
Financial administrative penalties	1
Formal prosecutions	8



## ENVIRONMENTAL AND SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

Marine environmental and scientific research functions continue to develop and expand in line with the developing role and remit of the authority. The environmental and science team undertake fisheries stock assessment work, collate and analyse seabed habitat and water column data, review marine licensing applications and consents, support marine habitat conservation and management through engagement with European Marine Site (EMS) management schemes and Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ) programmes and oversee the internal management of data. This work is guided by an annual research and evidence plan and a five-year strategic plan.

### **Fisheries Stock Assessment work**

The majority of species exploited within the NEIFCA district are a component of wider stock units which extend beyond the six-mile limit and also into neighbouring IFCA districts. During 2024/2025, officers improved the analysis methods used in lobster, crab, and scallop stock assessments. A Multiple Indicator Framework, incorporating both specific reference points and proxy measures, was applied to monitor fish stocks and support sustainable fisheries management. This analytical work continues to develop and evolve and is underpinned by a comprehensive stock assessment programme which includes quayside sampling at four main ports including Hartlepool, Whitby, Scarborough and Bridlington and an offshore monitoring programme covering each of the five main ICES areas located within and surrounding the authority's district.

### **Marine Licensing and Consents**

During the reporting period, authority officers reviewed 24 licensing and consent applications covering a wide range of projects from maintenance and capital dredging to discharging at sea and large infrastructure applications, including developments within major ports in the Tees and Humber estuaries, offshore renewables, pipelines and cabling.



# Education and Outreach

Scarborough 2019





# MARINE PROTECTED AREAS

## European Marine Sites (EMS)

The NEIFCA district contains five European Marine Sites (EMSs); Northumbria Coast, Teesmouth and Cleveland Coast, Flamborough Head, Humber Estuary and the Greater Wash. Flamborough Head and the Humber Estuary are each supported by a management group comprising statutory authorities and other relevant bodies and NEIFCA plays an active role in each. NEIFCA workstreams within the EMSs focus on four main areas; active participation in the EMS management schemes and associated projects; the provision of guidance to developers and input into the licensing conditions of development consent orders within and adjacent to EMSs; stock assessments of commercially important finfish and crustacea; and the appropriate assessment and management of fisheries within EMS boundaries through both voluntary and regulatory measures. Significant progress was made during 2019/2020 in reducing risk to designated Marine Protected Area (MPA) features associated with fishing activity. A seasonal netting prohibition in the waters surrounding Flamborough Head and Filey Brigg came into force to protect the largest mainland UK breeding seabird colony; home to 412,000 seabirds. In addition, a trawling permit management system was introduced for the Humber Estuary. Control of trawl effort will help to protect the valuable habitats and species within the estuary, which also acts as vital spawning and nursery grounds for a range of fish species. Regulations to improve fishery data collection have also been approved. Such regulations remain under continuous review to ensure that they maintain appropriate levels of feature protection across all the MPAs located within the NEIFCA district.

On 25 February 2025 a new byelaw regulation was submitted to Defra for formal confirmation. This new regulation will enhance protection for sea grass with the Humber estuary.

A further byelaw regulation entered Quality Assurance (QA) stage 5 with the MMO. This regulation will enable NEIFCA to manage levels of potting effort throughout its district and reduce associated impacts within MPA sites.

## Marine Conservation

The NEIFCA district contains two MCZ sites; Runswick Bay and Holderness Inshore. Full assessments have been completed on both sites and appropriate management measures supporting their protection are already in place. Work to establish a new Management Group to encompass both MCZs is supported through the Yorkshire Marine Nature Partnership.

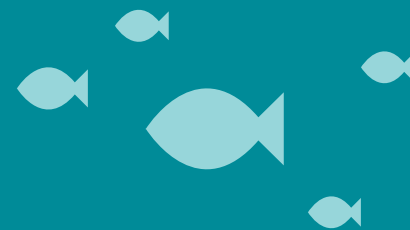
## Data Management

All raw data gathered from the NEIFCA district is stored electronically in a format enabling ease of manipulation, import into other programmes and statistical analysis. Spatial data is stored in shape file format for presentation and analysis in the GIS platforms. This is a developing workstream that aims to generate key data layers that present information related to the NEIFCA district, such as management regimes, fishing effort, habitat types and commercial species ranges.

## EXTERNALLY FUNDED PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES

### **European Lobster Larval Settlement Index Project**

Funded by the DEFRA Fisheries Industry Science Partnership (FISP) scheme, this collaborative project with the fishing industry began in 2022 and was successfully completed in 2024. Its primary objective was to improve understanding of the seasonality, distribution, and abundance of lobster larvae and Early Benthic Phase (EBP) lobsters—newly settled post-larval individuals. The project generated valuable preliminary data on lobster larvae and species diversity, laying the groundwork for future research aimed at developing a more predictive stock assessment model. Due to its success and significance, the project has been included in the annual research plan for continuation. This project concluded during 2024/2025 and a final report has since been published and submitted to Defra. Officers are planning to continue this investigative work into lobster larval settlement as part of its wider annual research programme.





## STAFF TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

A new staffing appraisal system first implemented during November 2021 was maintained through 2024/2025. This system links to pay progression and performance and has strengthened the identification of individual training and development needs across all the operational teams. Alongside it, progress against staff training and development needs are monitored centrally.



# COMMUNICATIONS, PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT AND PARTNERSHIP WORKING

## **NEIFCA Website**

The authority's website and social media, such as Facebook, remains at the forefront of its drive to improve overall communications, accessibility to information and associated services. A new Authority website 'went live' during March 2022. It carries a much clearer, simpler format which is more straightforward to navigate. Authority staff edit and update the content directly negating the need for third party intervention. Stakeholders can access a range of services from the website including applications for fishing permits and provision of feedback on a wide range of topical issues.

## **Tyne to Tees, Shores and Seas - SeaScapes Partnership**

The SeaScapes project is a partnership of local, regional and national organisations working in the coastal, marine and heritage sectors that have come together to better protect and celebrate the unique coastline between the rivers Tyne and Tees. The first National Lottery Heritage Fund supported Marine Landscape Partnership will deliver around 23 projects over the next four years worth £5 million to the communities of South Tyneside, Sunderland, Durham and Hartlepool.

## **Yorkshire Marine Nature Partnership**

Delivery of a well managed network of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) is a key work area for NEIFCA. With the growing number of MPAs, effective site management requires new ways of working and a collaborative approach. As a member of the Flamborough Head European Marine Site Management Group, National Lottery Heritage Funding was obtained to establish the Yorkshire Marine Nature Partnership. The emerging partnership is focussed on supporting, understanding, managing and caring for Yorkshire's seas, coastline and hinterland, working with cross-sector partners to achieve shared aims and promote holistic action in the marine and coastal environment.



### **Feedback System**

During March 2022 NEIFCA agreed a new service level agreement with East Riding of Yorkshire Council for the provision of enhanced support covering both feedback and information governance. This support was utilised during 2024/2025 to assess and respond to Freedom of Information (FOI) requests and formal complaints.

### **Partnership Working**

NEIFCA works extensively, collaboratively and proactively with a wide range of partner agencies and organisations, most notably, the MMO, Environment Agency (EA), marine policing units, Defra, the Seafish Industry Authority and the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust. During 2024/2025 much of that associated work involved supporting the national development and implementation of Fisheries Management Plans (FMPS) a new statutory requirement of the 2020 Fisheries Act. Key plans of specific interest to NEIFCA include crab and lobster, king scallop and sea bass. Active involvement in the programme through 2024/2025 included attending and actively contributing in implementation groups and providing timely data, information and advice when requested by Defra leads.

Further collaborative partnership working was fostered at national level through the IFCA Chief Officers Group (COG), the national IFCA/MMO Strategic Operations Group (SOG) and the Defra Marine and Fisheries Chief Officers Group (MAFCO).

Outside operational partnership working, during 2024/2025, NEIFCA officers also worked closely with colleagues from the Angling Trust on a range of local public engagement initiatives.

From an enforcement and compliance perspective NEIFCA maintained an active and collaborative working relationship with MMO colleagues which included attendance and participation in monthly joint Tasking and Coordination Group (TCG) meetings, the national joint Strategic Operational Group (SOG) and the National Inshore Marine Enforcement Group (NIMEG). The monthly TCG meetings enable the review of shared intelligence and the associated tasking of joint actions to tackle issues as they emerge and develop locally. During 2024/2025 this work was further enhanced through the commissioning of a bespoke joint intelligence database known as 'CLUE'. Since the commissioning of the 'CLUE' system NEIFCA has uploaded over 97 individual fisheries intelligence records covering a wide range of issues. As a result of this collaborative approach several joint enforcement operations were undertaken to target illegal fisheries activities during 2024/2025.

Throughout the reporting period extensive joint working was undertaken by NEIFCA's shore operations team in conjunction with the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority (GLAA), the Borders Agency and local policing and public protection teams in response to the illegal gathering of certain intertidal shellfish species throughout the Authority's district. Officers also worked actively with the Environment Agency (EA), policing intertidal netting activity along the coast and marine policing units in more general enforcement and compliance work.



### **National IFCA Association**

A national association was established on 24 March 2011 to represent and support the work of IFCA's. NEIFCA continues to play an active role in this association through the Chairman and Chief Officer. Throughout 2023/2024 the national Association of IFCA's (AIFCA) played a strong supporting role across the ten IFCA's delivering cohesion and collaboration which included supporting IFCA engagement across a number of national projects including the Coastal Health and Livelihoods project (CHLE), a CEFAS led project which is focused on improving the planning, programming and response to unforeseen events impacting on the health of the marine environment and associated livelihoods such as the Tees and North Yorkshire shellfish mortality event.







North Eastern IFCA staff and BBC presenter Tom Heap courtesy of BBC Countryfile following a film shoot on 18 June 2021 which aired on 4 July 2021.



## NATIONAL IFCA 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;

NEIFCA work streams and organisational priorities are geared towards the positive achievement of the national vision: outlined on page 4.

To support the positive delivery of the above national vision, IFCAs have agreed a set of national success criteria matched with corresponding working-level objectives. The vision, success criteria and national working objectives are designed to assist in the creation of a shared understanding of the aims and objectives of IFCAs nationally and focus positive service delivery towards achievement of the national vision. These national IFCA performance criteria also link directly to the UK Marine Policy Statement.

### **Focus and Priorities for the Year - Annual Plan 2024/2025**

Each year authority members agree and set their objectives and priorities for the year ahead which are outlined within the summary work programme contained within the authority's 2024/2025 annual plan. The 2024/2025 plan was adopted by members on 7 March 2024.



# NATIONAL IFCA WORKING LEVEL OBJECTIVES

The following tables provide a summary of the authority’s progress towards achieving the Success Criteria and supporting Working Level Objectives (WLO) during the 2024/2025 reporting period.

31 March 2025



Completed



Ongoing



Not started



## WORKING LEVEL OBJECTIVE

The IFCA will maintain and implement an effective communication strategy.

## OUTCOME(S)

The IFCA will maintain a database of stakeholder contacts that will have been reviewed and updated by 31 March each year.

The IFCA will have completed a review of its communication strategy and implementation plan by 31 March each year.

## PERFORMANCE INDICATOR(S) UPDATE 2024/2025

Through its fishing permitting schemes NEIFCA maintains an annual database of some 3,000 individual contacts covering both commercial and recreational fishing.

The authority maintains a formal communication strategy which is reviewed annually.

Copies of annual plans are sent to the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) Secretary of State by 30 April each year.

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.

The IFCA will have reviewed its website by the last working day of each month.

A new authority website 'went live' during at the beginning of April 2022 and information is updated on a daily basis which includes information on live projects or events occurring within the NEIFCA district.

Copies of annual reports are sent to Defra's Secretary of State by 30 November in the year in which they are published.



## WORKING LEVEL OBJECTIVE

The IFCA will contribute to co-ordinated activity at a national level.

## OUTCOME(S)

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 within the annual plan.

## PERFORMANCE INDICATOR(S) UPDATE 2024/2025

Throughout the reporting year authority officers have engaged extensively in a wide range of nationally coordinated work streams including joint training and joint intelligence gathering through the National Association of IFCAs, the National IFCA Chief Officers Group, the National IFCA Technical Advisory Group and the National Inshore Marine Enforcement Group. In addition, throughout 2024/2025 NEIFCA played a full and active role in newly established Regional Fisheries Groups and maintained active engagement and participation in the national fisheries intelligence gathering programme. During 2024 the MMO, in partnership with IFCA's, commissioned 'Clue' a new joint fisheries intelligence database system. Since commissioning, NEIFCA has inputted over 97 intelligence reports onto the system.

The IFCA and its principle partners will have a clear understanding of the roles and responsibilities. Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) with MMO, Natural England, Environment Agency and Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Services (CEFAS) will be maintained.

The IFCA will have reviewed all of its MoUs by 31 March each year. There will be a clear plan in place to update MoUs where necessary, to an agreed standard.

National MoU's are maintained through the Association of IFCA's but more recently have largely been superseded by joint operational delivery groups such as the IFCA/MMO Strategic Operational Group, NIMEG and TAG.



## WORKING LEVEL OBJECTIVE

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.

## OUTCOME(S)

The IFCA will ensure its enforcement risk register and strategy are published and available on its website from 1 April each year.

The IFCA will compile records of enforcement activity in a standard format; provide them to AIFCA for collation and publish them on its website.

## PERFORMANCE INDICATOR(S) UPDATE 2024/2025

The authority publishes a comprehensive annual risk register which covers all aspects of risk including enforcement. The authority publishes details of its enforcement activity within its annual report and provides statistics to the National Association of IFCAs in a standard format.

The IFCA will manage operational activity and capture, record, evaluate and disseminate intelligence that is compatible with partner organisations. It is engaged in joint working with partner organisations.

Working to the National Intelligence Model (NIM) and participating actively through Tasking and Coordination Groups (TCGs).

Throughout 2024/2025 Officers have been actively engaged in the joint fisheries intelligence gathering programme, collating, assessing and exchanging intelligence in accordance with NIM principles.

This work culminated in the commissioning of the 'Clue' system during 2023/2024. A new bespoke fisheries intelligence database managed by the MMO to enhance joint intelligence gathering with IFCAs.

This involved active participation in the TCG process including joint TCGs with MMO officers.



## WORKING LEVEL OBJECTIVE

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.

## OUTCOME(S)

The IFCA will adopt the national code of conduct for IFCOs which will be reviewed annually and published on its website.

Warranted Officers attain accreditation. ALL undertaking continuing professional development.

## PERFORMANCE INDICATOR(S) UPDATE 2024/2025

Authority Officers undergo a wide range of training supported by a twelve month probationary process. That training incorporates an induction, an IFCA residential course and 'on-the-job' training and evaluation.

A national code of conduct for IFCA enforcement officers was agreed in 2010 and was adopted by the authority. It is reviewed annually.





## WORKING LEVEL OBJECTIVE

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.

## OUTCOME(S)

The IFCA will record site-specific management considerations for Marine Protected Areas and report progress to the authority.

The IFCA will publish data analysis and evidence supporting new management measures, on its website 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.

## PERFORMANCE INDICATOR(S) UPDATE 2024/2025

Authority officers have completed extensive site feature/activity interaction risk matrices for all Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), including European Marine Sites (EMSs) and Marine Conservation Zones (MCZs) occurring within the NEIFCA district. A significant supporting management programme commenced during 2013 prioritised towards high risk activities. This work was advanced during 2019/2020 with the confirmation of two regulations protecting features at Flamborough Head, Filey and the Humber Estuary. On the 1 December 2022 the Authority approved the extension of the protected sea grass area at Spurn Point in the Humber Estuary Byelaw The IFCA actively supports 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.



## WORKING LEVEL OBJECTIVE

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.

Proportionate regulation (for example introducing a legal mechanism such as a byelaw) is used as a last resort; The effectiveness of interventions to improve the delivery of beneficial outcomes is continuously monitored; and

There is a clear IFCA Committee process for dealing with agreed interventions quickly, efficiently and effectively, particularly for emergency byelaws.

## OUTCOME(S)

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.

Progress made in relevant Fisheries Management Plan areas, including maximum sustainable yield commitments, will be noted in the IFCA's annual report.

## PERFORMANCE INDICATOR(S) UPDATE 2024/2025

The sustainable management of key lobster and edible crab stocks was further enhanced during 2019/2020 through measures introduced in the revised Crustacea Conservation byelaw. Protection for soft shelled and berried lobsters will help to bolster spawning stock of this species, while the introduction of a maximum pot size and reducing the maximum size of vessel permitted to fish within inshore areas are important effort controls that will help to ensure the continued viability of the regionally significant fishery. A new minimum size byelaw, developed in collaboration with a number of other IFCAs, was also introduced, confirmed during February 2021. As was a catch return byelaw aimed at improving data capture to inform future management decisions.

A Fisheries Management Plan has been adopted to support the inshore scallop dredging fishery. The plan has been informed by a four year pilot trial which commenced following the introduction of emergency control measures at the beginning of 2015. The plan describes the state of the stocks and the fishery derived from research undertaken by the authority, it outlines current national and local management policy and objectives, and highlights the conservation and fishery management measures in place to ensure a sustainable fishery. The plan will guide development of the dredge fishery, balancing the needs of different stakeholders.

At national level, during 2024/2025, NEIFCA is also fully engaged in the implementation of Fisheries Management Plans (FMPs) across key exploited stocks including King Scallop, crab and lobster, sea bass and whelk.



## WORKING LEVEL OBJECTIVE

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.

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.

## OUTCOME(S)

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.

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.

IFCA staff will have annual performance management plans in place. Annual appraisals for all staff will have been completed by 31 May each year.

## PERFORMANCE INDICATOR(S) UPDATE 2024/2025

The authority has produced an annual plan and annual report since 2010. The 2024/2025 plan was considered and endorsed by the committee on 7 March 2024 and submitted to the Secretary of State. The annual report covering the 2023/2024 period was submitted to the Secretary of State during November 2024.

A new staffing appraisal system commenced during November 2022 which incorporated performance related pay progression. This system enables a bespoke annual training plan to be set to meet individual staff needs underpinned by personal set of work objectives for the year ahead. All staffing appraisals were completed by 31 May 2025.

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.

IFCA staff will have annual performance management plans in place. Annual appraisals for all staff will have been completed by 31 May each year.

During 2024/2025 the authority maintained a system of 'hybrid' meetings providing for attendance in person combined with virtual engagement to conduct its business. Agendas, supporting papers and minutes were published in accordance with the authority's standing orders and posted on the authority's website.



## WORKING LEVEL OBJECTIVE

Standard operating procedures describe how data is captured and shared with principal partners.

## OUTCOME(S)

The IFCA's contribution to Technical Advisory Group (TAG) and progress that it has made towards a national evidence needs programme will be recorded in the IFCA's annual report.

## PERFORMANCE INDICATOR(S) UPDATE 2024/2025

The authority's environmental and scientific leads are fully engaged with other IFCA colleagues through the national IFCA Technical Advisory Group. Through this group, the authority's officers have developed and implemented standard operating practices across most of its work streams.



Non-confidential meta-data collected through the IFCA research programme should be recorded in a database available to the marine research community.

Non-confidential data is shared reducing the need for duplication of survey effort.

Authority officers share non-confidential meta data through MEDIN and 'one drive' and improving internal data sharing within the authority's membership remains an ongoing work stream.







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