North Eastern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority

ANNUAL REPORT

2025/2026



North Eastern IFCA
Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority

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."

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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.

It has been a busy reporting year for NEIFCA. On 21 June 2025 NEIFCA's new main vessel, North Eastern Guardian IV (NEG IV) was officially named and blessed in Whitby, North Yorkshire and following an extended period of testing and commissioning, officially entered service on 31 January 2026. NEIFCA's offshore assets were further enhanced during February 2026 when it took delivery of a new 6.4m rigid inflatable boat (RIB), *'Bravo II'*. This vessel will operate in tandem with NEG IV to support offshore enforcement and compliance work.

On 4 March 2026 Defra confirmed a new shellfish permit byelaw regulation following five years of development work. This new regulation will support a more proactive approach to the management of shellfish exploitation, both on shore and at sea. It includes two new permitting schemes covering both commercial and recreational activity. In the first year of implementation commercial vessels will, for the first time, be restricted to working a maximum of 1000 pots, recreational permit holders be restricted to working a maximum 5 pots.

Throughout the reporting year the environmental and science team furthered catch assessment and monitoring work in partnership with the local fishing industry and the shore operations team expanded its programme of active partnership working with key agencies.

Professor Michael Elliott, Chair of NEIFCA.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Annual Report covers the period 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026. 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 long-standing national and local working objectives.

Executive summary achievements

Main achievements and outputs during 2025/2026 included the following:

- 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 2025/2026.

- The new vessel, NEG IV was launched on 8 May 2025 followed by an official naming and blessing ceremony on 21 June 2025. As part of the commissioning and testing process NEG IV sailed from Whitby to participate in the Southampton Workboat Show at the end of June 2025. Following the completion of extensive trials and testing NEG IV was officially handed over to NEIFCA by Parkol Marine Ltd in early 2026.

- Towards the end of the reporting year a new shellfish permitting byelaw regulation was confirmed by Defra on 4 March 2026. This represented the culmination of five years of work and will significantly strengthen NEIFCA's ability to more effectively manage the exploitation of shellfish species both onshore and offshore.

- Agreement achieved with members on an uplifted, annual levy of £1.7 million which included a phased increase in revenue funding to meet the projected costs of running the new main vessel from 1 April 2026.

- During 2025/2026 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.

- NEIFCA retains a strong commitment to active partnership working and continues to build on that through active collaboration with the Marine Management Organisation (MMO), Defra, the Seafish Industry Authority and the Centre for the Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (CEFAS).

Continued on the next page...

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Executive summary achievements continued...

During 2025/2026 much of that work involved supporting the national development and implementation of 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 2025/2026. This included regular attendance on national working groups such as those focused on crab, 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 2025/2026 NEIFCA continued to share national fisheries intelligence and outcomes via the CLUE system and information relating to fisheries inspections. This continues to enhance and strengthen NEIFCA's collaborative approach to enforcement and compliance work.

During 2025/2026, NEIFCA officers issued 22 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 2025/2026 the Authority's shore operations team maintained an active partnership working programme with a number of key agencies including local maritime policing units, the Environment Agency (EA) and the MMO. Much of the associated work focused on targeting illegal intertidal shellfish gathering and fisheries compliance monitoring.

One notable example of this work included a multi-agency response to illegal fishing activity at Sunderland which took place on 10 October 2025 involving the Northumbrian marine police unit and Northumberland IFCA which lead to the seizure of a quantity of illegally set pots and the release of undersized lobsters back to sea.

- During March 2025 a major maritime incident was declared when a large container ship, the *'MV Salong'*, collided with a stationary tanker, the *'Stena Immaculate'*, carrying jet fuel, off the East Yorkshire coast of the NEIFCA District. Following the incident NEIFCA supported the Maritime and Coastguard Agency in a coordinated multi agency response which included Eastern IFCA, the Local Authorities and a number of other organisations and bodies. Thankfully the weather conditions at the time of the incident were very favourable and both ships remained afloat and largely intact which minimised the environmental impact.

NEG IV, SCALLOPS



INTRODUCTION

This 2025/2026 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 2025/2026 Annual Plan and also provides a summary of progress against long-standing 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 MMO and singular members representing Natural England, the EA and the MMO.

Financial overview

NEIFCA's total annual levy for the reporting period was agreed by members during March at £1.7 million. The budget was allocated across four main areas:

- **Central/Headquarters:** 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 operational activities.
- **Grant aided projects:** Projects which are specific or time bound and wholly funded by external sources.

See table on Page 7.

COMPREHENSIVE INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT

Income versus expenditure is summarised in the following tables covering the 2025/2026 financial year. The final budget outturn shows an underspend of £0.463 million which was primarily due to delays in the final acceptance of the new vessel NEG IV, associated savings in offshore running costs and surplus bank interest. The Authority agreed to transfer a small amount of the savings into the 2026/2027 revenue budget to support fuel costs with the remainder transferred to the vessel replacement fund.

NEIFCA OUTTURN 2025/2026			
Net expenditure	**Approved budget allocation**	**Actual outturn**	**Variance**
	£M	**£M**	**£M**
Central/Headquarters	£0.452	£0.364	-£0.088
Land based operations	£0.150	£0.159	£0.009
Offshore operations	£0.858	£0.567	-£0.291
Environment	£0.167	£0.144	-£0.023
Grant aided projects	-£0.014	-£0.083	-£0.069
Patrol vessel replacement	£0.009	£0.031	£0.022
Total	**£1.622**	**£1.182**	**-£0.440**
Represented by	**Approved budget allocation**	**Actual outturn**	**Variance**
	£M	**£M**	**£M**
Annual levy on local authorities	-£1.713	-£1.713	£0.000
Contribution from reserves	-£0.009	-£0.031	-£0.023
Contribution to vehicle replacement	£0.010	£0.010	£0.000
Contribution to renewals fund	£0.089	£0.089	£0.000
Total funding	**-£1.623**	**-£1.645**	**-£0.023**
Outturn	**£0.000**	**-£0.463**	**-£0.463**

ORGANISATIONAL REVIEW

2025/2026

Main achievements

- During December 2024 members approved an uplifted annual levy of £1.7 million for the 2025/2026 year. This included a phased uplift of 10.5% to support the projected financing and leasing costs associated with the new main vessel asset.



NEG IV SCALLOP DREDGES

- 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 and the vessel was lifted into the water on 8 May 2025.

  As part of the planned commissioning and trials programme the new vessel sailed from Whitby to Southampton during June 2025 to participate in the *National Work-boat Exhibition*.

  The vessel was officially named and blessed as North Eastern Guardian IV (NEG IV) on 21 June 2025 and following an extended period of trials and system testing, was formally handed over to NEIFCA in early 2026.

  The vessel entered operational service during March 2026. As part of the NEIFCA vessel replacement programme the Authority took delivery of a new 6.4m Rigid Inflatable Boat (RIB), *'Bravo II'* during February 2026. This new vessel will operate in tandem with NEG IV to support the delivery of offshore fisheries enforcement and compliance work.

- During the reporting period two new byelaws were confirmed by Defra which will strengthen the management of fishing activities in the Humber Estuary and the exploitation of shellfish species both on and off shore across the NEIFCA district.

  The Humber Estuary Fishing Byelaw 2022 was confirmed on 28 July 2025. The new regulation strengthens protection for important sea grass habitat with the estuary.

  The Shellfish Permit Byelaw 2022 was confirmed on 4 March 2026. This new regulation, for the first time, gives the Authority the ability to limit the number of pots worked and permits issued for shell-fishing within its district.

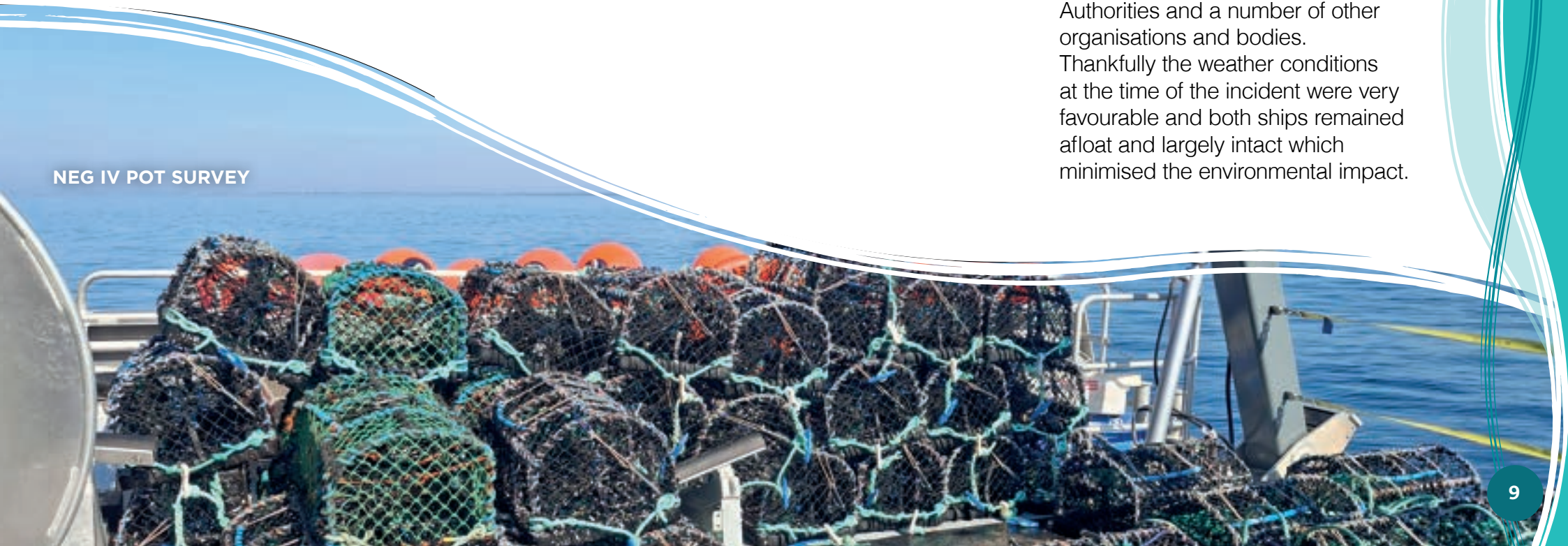
  The Humber Estuary Fishing Byelaw was implemented during August 2025 and planning for the, first stage, implementation of the new Shellfish Permit Byelaw was complete by the end of March 2026.

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ORGANISATIONAL REVIEW

2025/2026

- Throughout 2025/2026 key NEIFCA staff have maintained very active engagement across the national FMP programme. Key plans of specific interest to NEIFCA include the crab and lobster, king scallop and sea bass. Involvement through 2025/2026 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 work streams NEIFCA also played an active role in Marine Protected Area (MPA) work through 2025/2026. This involved the timely provision of data, information and advice specific to MPA interactions in the NEIFCA district.
- During March 2025 a major maritime incident was declared when a large container ship, the *'MV Salong'*, collided with a stationary tanker, the *'Stena Immaculate'*, carrying jet fuel, off the East Yorkshire coast of the NEIFCA district. Following the incident, led by the Environmental and Scientific Manager, Dr Ralf Bublitz, NEIFCA supported the Maritime and Coastguard Agency in a coordinated multi agency response which included Eastern IFCA, the Local Authorities and a number of other organisations and bodies. Thankfully the weather conditions at the time of the incident were very favourable and both ships remained afloat and largely intact which minimised the environmental impact.



NEG IV POT SURVEY

CENTRAL POLICY

2025/2026

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 EA 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 2025.

Emergency IFCA byelaws

Section 157 of the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 provides a mechanism for IFCAs 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 seven separate occasions.

FISH & SHIPS FESTIVAL 2026



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, NEG IV, which carries a 6.4 metre RIB to facilitate the boarding and inspection of fishing vessels at sea fishing vessels at sea alongside a 9.5 metre cabin RIB to support its offshore operations.

ENFORCEMENT OUTPUTS 2025/2026	
Enforcement output	**Frequency**
Vessel inspections	330
Vessel observations	469
Inspection reports completed	330
Verbal warnings	22
Written warnings	0
Offences reported	6
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 form part of wider stock units that extend beyond the six-mile limit and into neighbouring IFCA districts. To support sustainable fisheries management, a multiple indicator framework is used to annually monitor lobster, crab and scallop stocks. This framework incorporates both defined reference points and proxy indicators to assess stock status and trends.

The 2025 stock monitoring report indicates generally positive trends for lobster stocks, with abundance remaining stable and an increase in Landings per Unit Effort (LPUE), suggesting that more lobsters are being caught per pot. In contrast, edible crab stocks continue to show a declining trend. However, an increased abundance of undersized crabs has been recorded, which may indicate improved recruitment and provide some optimism for future stock recovery.

The decline in edible crab stocks is not unique to the NEIFCA district and has been reported across several areas of the UK. In response, IFCAs are working collaboratively through Fisheries Management Plan (FMP) working groups to develop management measures for crab fisheries, including consideration of effort controls in offshore waters.

The 2025 Scallop Monitoring Report indicates that scallop stocks within the district remain stable under current levels of exploitation.

NEIFCA's analytical approach continues to develop and evolve, supported by a comprehensive stock assessment programme. This includes regular quayside sampling at the district's four principal ports – Hartlepool, Whitby, Scarborough and Bridlington – as well as an offshore monitoring programme covering the five main ICES assessment areas located within and adjacent to the Authority's district.

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ENVIRONMENTAL AND SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

Marine licensing and consents

During the reporting period, Authority officers reviewed 38 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.

Emerging fisheries

Since the recreational catch-and-release Blue fin Tuna Fishery opened in 2024, participation within the NEIFCA district increased during 2025. While undertaking offshore patrols off Whitby, NEIFCA officers encountered a number of recreational angling vessels operating without the appropriate licenses and carrying equipment specifically designed for tuna angling.

In response to this unexpected increase in unregulated activity, together with limitations in the existing regulatory framework, the Authority proposed the development of an emergency byelaw. The proposed measure would prohibit the carriage of tuna-targeting angling gear on board unlicensed vessels during the tuna-fishing season.

NEIFCA has worked closely with DEFRA, the MMO and the Angling Trust to address these emerging management challenges. As part of this collaborative approach, NEIFCA officers have drafted an emergency byelaw that can be implemented, if required, for the 2026 tuna season to support effective regulation and compliance within the fishery.



MARINE PROTECTED AREAS

European Marine Sites (EMS)

The NEIFCA district contains five EMS; 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 work-streams within the EMS 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 EMS; stock assessments of commercially important fin-fish 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 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 sea bird colony; home to 412,000 sea birds.

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 MPA located within the NEIFCA district.

On 28 July 2025 the Minster of State confirmed a new byelaw regulation to improve and enhance the management of fishing activities occurring within the Humber Estuary. This new byelaw extended protections for sea grass within the boundaries of the estuary.

On 4 March 2026 the Minster of State confirmed a second new byelaw regulation which strengthened the Authority's ability to more effectively manage the exploitation of shellfish species both onshore and offshore throughout its district. In relation to MPA a new cap on the numbers of commercial lobster pots permitted per vessel has been set alongside a reduction in the number of permitted recreational pots.

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 MCZ is supported through the Yorkshire Marine Nature Partnership (YMNP).

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 work stream 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.



NEG IV POT SURVEY

STAFF TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

A new staffing appraisal system first implemented during November 2021 was maintained through 2025/2026. 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.





NEG IV POT SURVEY

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.

YMNP

Delivery of a well managed network of 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 YMNP. 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 ERYC for the provision of enhanced support covering both feedback and information governance. This support was utilised during 2025/2026 to assess and respond to Freedom of Information (FOI) requests and formal complaints. During the reporting year NEIFCA received two formal complaints and two FOI requests which were managed in accordance with the feedback policy.

Partnership working

NEIFCA works extensively, collaboratively and pro actively with a wide range of partner agencies and organisations, most notably, MMO, EA, marine policing units, Defra, Seafish Industry Authority and Yorkshire Wildlife Trust.

During 2025/2026 much of that associated work involved supporting the national development and implementation of 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 2025/2026 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).

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COMMUNICATIONS, PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT AND PARTNERSHIP WORKING

Outside operational partnership working, during 2025/2026, 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 2025/2026 this work was further enhanced through the bespoke joint intelligence database known as CLUE. Since the commissioning of the CLUE system NEIFCA has uploaded over 2,019 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 2025/2026.

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 EA, policing intertidal netting activity along the coast and marine policing units in more general enforcement and compliance work.

On 10 October 2025 the Shore operations manager, Steven Mallinson, led a multi-agency response to illegal fishing at Sunderland involving the Northumbrian Marine Police Unit and Northumberland IFCA which lead to the seizure of a quantity of illegally set pots and the release of undersized lobsters back to sea.

During March 2025 a major maritime incident was declared when a large container ship, the *'MV Salong'*, collided with a stationary tanker, the *'Stena Immaculate'*, carrying jet fuel, off the East Yorkshire coast of the NEIFCA District. Following the incident NEIFCA supported the Maritime and Coastguard Agency in a coordinated multi agency response which included Eastern IFCA, Local Authorities and a number of other organisations and bodies. Thankfully the weather conditions at the time of the incident were very favourable and both ships remained afloat and largely intact which minimised the environmental impact.

National IFCA association

A national association was established on 24 March 2011 to represent and support the work of IFCAs. NEIFCA continues to play an active role in this association through the Chairman and Chief Officer. Throughout 2025/2026 the national Association of IFCAs (AIFCA) played a strong supporting role across the 10 IFCAS delivering cohesion and collaboration which included supporting IFCA engagement across a number of national projects including the Coastal Health and Livelihoods project (CHLE), a Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Services (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.

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 the front page of this document.

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 2025/2026

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 2025/2026 Annual Plan. The 2025/2026 plan was adopted by members on 6 March 2025.



NEG III

SEAGRASS AND SALTMARSH HABITAT, HUMBER ESTUARY



NATIONAL IFCA WORKING LEVEL OBJECTIVES

31 March 2026

Completed | Ongoing | Not started

WORKING LEVEL OBJECTIVE	OUTCOME(S)	PERFORMANCE INDICATOR(S) UPDATE 2025/2026	
The IFCA will maintain and implement an effective communication strategy.	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.	Through its fishing permitting schemes NEIFCA maintains an annual database of some 2,200 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 Defra's 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. During 2025/2026 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.	

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WORKING LEVEL OBJECTIVE	OUTCOME(S)	PERFORMANCE INDICATOR(S) UPDATE 2025/2026	
The IFCA will contribute to co-ordinated activity at a national level.	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.	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 2025/2026 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 IFCAs, commissioned CLUE a new joint fisheries intelligence database system. Since commissioning, NEIFCA has imputed over 219 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, E A and 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 MoUs are maintained through the Association of IFCAs but more recently have largely been superseded by joint operational delivery groups such as IFCA, MMO SOG, NIMEG and TAG.	

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WORKING LEVEL OBJECTIVE	OUTCOME(S)	PERFORMANCE INDICATOR(S) UPDATE 2025/2026
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.	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.	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 2025/2026 officers have been actively engaged in the joint fisheries intelligence gathering programme, collating, assessing and exchanging intelligence in accordance with NIM principles. This information was captured on the joint fisheries intelligence database system, CLUE, managed and operated by the MMO. NEIFCA has now submitted over 250 intelligence records onto this system. The intelligence records are considered and actioned via the monthly TCG meetings held jointly with MMO operational leads.
Warranted IFCOs will be trained and accredited to nationally agreed standards. They will maintain professionalism and make appropriate interventions to deliver efficient, effective enforcement activity.	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.	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.

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WORKING LEVEL OBJECTIVE	OUTCOME(S)	PERFORMANCE INDICATOR(S) UPDATE 2025/2026
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.	The IFCA will record site-specific management considerations for MPAs 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.	Authority officers have completed extensive site feature/activity interaction risk matrices for all MPAs, including EMSs and 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 28 July 2025 the Secretary of State for Defra confirmed a new fisheries management byelaw covering the Humber Estuary which extended protections for sensitive sea grass habitats within the estuary. 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 EMS; and that local management contributes to delivery of targets for the Marine Strategy Framework Directive, Water Framework Directive and Marine Plans.

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WORKING LEVEL OBJECTIVE	OUTCOME(S)	PERFORMANCE INDICATOR(S) UPDATE 2025/2026
The IFCA will develop FMPs 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.	The IFCA will include shared agreed objectives and actions from FMPs in its own annual plan, which will be published by 31 March each year. Progress made in relevant FMP areas, including maximum sustainable yield commitments, will be noted in the IFCAs annual report.	The sustainable management of key lobster and edible crab stocks was further enhanced during 2025/2026. On 4 March 2026 the Minister for State for Defra confirmed a new shellfish permit byelaw regulation which significantly enhanced NEIFCA's ability to more effectively manage the exploitation of shellfish stocks both on and offshore. This included the introduction of a cap on the number of commercial pots per vessel and a reduction in the number of recreational pots permitted from 10 to 5. A FMP 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 2025/2026, NEIFCA was also fully engaged in the implementation of FMPs across key exploited stocks including king scallop, crab and lobster, sea bass and whelk.

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WORKING LEVEL OBJECTIVE	OUTCOME(S)	PERFORMANCE INDICATOR(S) UPDATE 2025/2026
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.	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.	The Authority has produced an annual plan and annual report since 2010. The 2025/2026 plan was considered and endorsed by the committee on 6 March 2025 and submitted to the Secretary of State. The annual report covering the 2024/2025 period was submitted to the Secretary of State during November 2025. 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 2026.
Standard operating procedures describe how data is captured and shared with principal partners.	The IFCAs contribution to Technical Advisory Group (TAG) and progress that it has made towards a national evidence needs programme will be recorded in the IFCAs annual report.	The Authority's environmental and scientific leads are fully engaged with other IFCA colleagues through the national IFCA TAG. 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.

NEG IV SCALLOP SURVEY GEAR



North Eastern IFCA

Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority



North Eastern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority

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