

NORTH EASTERN INSHORE FISHERIES AND CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

Hybrid Meeting – Room 8, County Hall, Beverley

6 FEBRUARY 2026 - 13:30 Start

AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence
2. Declaration of Personal or Prejudicial Interests – Members to declare any interests in items on the Agenda and the nature of such interests

Items for decision

3. To take the Minutes of the Meeting held on 26 June 2025 as a correct record, consider any matters arising and authorise the Chairman to sign (*pages 1-7*)
4. To take the Minutes of the Executive Committee meetings held on 4 September 2025 (*pages 8-12*)
5. Budget monitoring 2025/2026 (*pages 13-17*)
6. Levy 2026/2027 (*pages 18-22*)
7. Byelaws Update (*pages 23-25*)

Items for discussion

8. Chief Officer's Operational Report (*pages 26-37*)
9. Science Advisory Group update (*pages 38-40*)
10. Fisheries monitoring report 2025 (*pages 41-45*)
11. Fisheries Statutes and Regulations – Prosecutions (*pages 46-47*)

Items for information

12. NEIFCA Annual Report 2024-2025 (*pages 48-82*)
13. Reports from partner Agencies and bodies
 - a. Marine Management Organisation
 - b. Environment Agency
 - c. Natural England
14. Any other items, which the Chairman decides, are urgent by reason of special circumstances which must be specified.

NORTH EASTERN INSHORE FISHERIES AND CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

**AUTHORITY MEETING
26 JUNE 2025**

Present:

Dr Stephen Axford
Councillor David Chance
Prof Michael Elliott
Mr Michael Montgomerie
Mr Graham Collins
Mr Andrew Faichney
Councillor Tim Norman
Councillor Johnathan Owen
Miss Rachel Hanbury
Mr Christian Proud
Councillor Nigel Cooke
Councillor Tracey Henry
Miss Rebecca Lynam
Prof Clare Fitzsimmons

Representing:

MMO appointee
North Yorkshire County Council
Chairman
MMO appointee
MMO appointee
MMO appointee
East Riding of Yorkshire Council
East Riding of Yorkshire Council
MMO appointee
MMO Representative
Stockton on Tees Borough Council
Hull City Council
MMO appointee
MMO appointee

Mr Darren Stevens, Clerk, Mr David McCandless, Chief Officer, Mr David Kirven, Treasurer, Dr Ralf Bublitz, Senior Environmental & Scientific Officer, Sarah Murray, Operational Support manager and Lynsey Marsden, MMO also attended the meeting.

The Committee met at The County Hall, Beverley, members were also able to attend the meeting via Teams. The meeting started at 09:30am

37.	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
	Apologies of absence were received from MMO members Will Jenkinson and Kevin Woodcock and Councill Members Allison, Swannick, Scanlan, Farren, Creevy,
38.	DECLARATION OF PERSONAL OR PREJUDICIAL INTERESTS
	Resolved –The Clerk asked Members to declare any personal or prejudicial interests in items on the Agenda and the nature of such interests. Councillor Tracey Henry declared that she stands as a member of the Hull and Goole Port Health Authority.
39.	GREETINGS AND INTRODUCTIONS TO NEW MEMBERS AND APPOINTEES
	The Clerk reported that the following new Members had been appointed to the Authority: Cllr Nigel Cooke – Stockton on Tees Cllr Sophia Farren – North East Lincolnshire
40.	TO ELECT A CHAIRMAN

	The Authority had received one expression of interest, in writing, from Prof Michael Elliott. The Clerk asked the Authority if there were any other nominations. There were no further nominations. Prof Michael Elliott was duly elected Chairman by a majority vote.
	Resolved - That Prof Michael Elliott, MMO appointee be elected as Chairman for the ensuing year.
41.	TO ELECT A VICE CHAIRMAN
	The Clerk reported that the authority had received one expression of interest in writing from Councillor David Chance, North Yorkshire County Council. There were no further nominations. Councillor David Chance was duly elected as Vice Chairman.
	Resolved - That Councillor David Chance be elected Vice-Chairman for the ensuing year.
42.	TO APPOINT AN EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
	Resolved – That the Chairman, Vice-Chairman Councillors Creevy, Swannick, Henry and Norman Mr Graham Collins, Dr Stephen Axford be appointed for the ensuing year.
43.	TO CONFIRM MEMBERSHIP OF STANDARDS COMMITTEE
	Resolved - That Councillors Owen, Chance and Clerk be appointed for the ensuing year.
44.	TO CONFIRM MEMBERSHIP OF THE SCIENCE ADVISORY GROUP
	Resolved – That Chair, Vice-Chairman Dr Stephen Axford, Miss Rebecca Lynam, Mr Graham Collins, Dr Clare Fitzsimmons, Prof Mike Elliott, Mr Michael Montgomerie, Mr Andrew Faichney, Councillor Tracey Henry and representatives from the Marine Management Organisation, Natural England and the Environment Agency be appointed for the ensuing year.
45.	TO APPOINT REPRESENTATIVES TO SERVE AND REPORT QUARTERLY
	Resolved - (a) That the following be appointed for the ensuing year to serve and report quarterly on :- Flamborough Harbour Commissioners (2 representatives): Councillor Tim Norman Professor Mike Elliott Staites Harbour Board (4 representatives)

	<p>Councillor Neil Swannick Mr Steven Mallinson NEIFCA Shore Operations Manager Miss Rachel Hanbury One position remains vacant</p> <p>(b) That the following be appointed for the ensuing year to attend meetings of:</p> <p>The Association of Inshore Fisheries & Conservation Authorities Forum (3 representatives):</p> <p>Chairman/(the Vice-Chairman to substitute when the Chairman is unable to attend) Clerk or Deputy Clerk Chief IFC Officer</p> <p>(c) That it be noted that the Chief IFC Officer was a Director of The Association of Inshore Fisheries & Conservation Authorities .</p>
46.	MINUTES OF THE AUTHORITY MEETING HELD ON 05 DECEMBER 2024
	Resolved – That the minutes of the Quarterly meeting held on 05 December 2024 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.
47.	MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE MEETING HELD ON 06 MARCH 2025
	The Chairman requested that Mr Bob Latimer be added to the list of attendees at the Executive meeting. The Chairman provided some information on the presentation given by Mr Latimer at the Executive meeting for the benefit of new members. Members reflected on the issues raised by Mr Latimer of sewage discharge in the Authority’s district and accountability in government agencies, and agreed that despite recognising the issues raised, it was not part of the Authority’s statutory remit and responsibilities and is a larger scale national problem. Mr Latimer had received written communication reflecting the Authority’s position from the Chair and the Chief Officer.
	Resolved –That the minutes of the Executive meeting held on 06 March 2025 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.
48.	NEIFCA OFFICER WORN BODY CAMERA CODE OF CONDUCT
	The Chief Officer presented a report to seek members approval to adopt an officer worn body camera code of practice. Officer worn body cameras were first introduced in 2007 to improve officer safety following an increase in the level of targeted threats and intimidation towards officers particularly in the Sunderland area. The evolution in the general operational use of body cameras pre-dated more recent, General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) legislation and although all the information captured on the camera systems is stored safely and securely, a supporting code of conduct has never been implemented. Recently the need for such a code was highlighted following a Subject Access Request (SAR) made under Freedom of Information legislation. Following this, and in full consultation with the East Riding of Yorkshire Council Information Governance and Feedback Manager, who provides support and

	<p>guidance to NEIFCA, a draft code of conduct was developed to support the future use and administration of information captured by officer body worn cameras. Amongst other things, including protocols covering the activation of cameras by officers, the code details the maximum retention periods for recorded images. The Chief Officer also advised members that all stored footage had been reviewed, and it was all now compliant with the provisions contained within the draft code as presented at the meeting. Members were assured that the code would be reviewed in line with any changes in legislation and best practice as appropriate. The Chairman recommended that the draft code of conduct be adopted across all IFCA's, the Chief Officer agreed that this would be a recommendation made by the Chief Officer Group to the AIFCA's.</p>
	<p>Resolved – a) That the Officer Worn Body Camera Code of Practice be approved and adopted.</p>
49.	NEIFCA FINANCIAL OUTTURN 2024/2025
	<p>The Treasurer of the Authority presented a report of the Annual Accounts for NEIFCA for the year ended 31 March 2025. The treasurer informed members that detailed monitoring of expenditure against the profiled budget had been undertaken on a monthly basis and reported to the Authority and Executive meetings throughout the year. At the Executive meeting on 6 March 2025, it was reported that the forecast outturn would be £1,274,436 underspend, the actual revenue outturn underspend was £378,666 along with a £858,903 overachievement of funding made up of £850,000 capital receipts for the sale of the patrol vessel and £8,898 transfer to the Renewals Fund from the External Projects reserve, previously approved at the Executive meeting on 6 March 2025, totalling £1,237,569. The Treasurer highlighted to members that the accuracy in the predicted underspend presented at the Executive meeting in March compared to the actual outturn position should give members confidence in the accuracy of the budget monitoring carried out throughout the year.</p> <p>The outturn position was made up of several compensating variances including employee vacancies due to planned delays in recruiting in the offshore team, bank interest rates and additional Defra 'grant in aid' of which £90,000 relates to grants awarded in the 2023/24 financial year and received in 2024/25. A detailed break down of the outturn position was included in the report.</p>
	<p>Resolved - a) That the Statement of Accounts were approved as presented b) That Members Approved the Outturn position</p>
50.	SCIENCE ADVISORY GROUP UPDATE 11 MARCH & 4 JUNE 2025
	<p>The Chair of SAG & the Environmental & Scientific Manager presented a report to update members on the most recent proceedings of the Science Advisory Group (SAG) following meetings held on 11 March and 4 June 25. Members discussed the report and the Environmental & Scientific Manager provided a detailed overview of the lobster and crab stock status report, the completion of the ELSI project and the scallop fishery monitoring report including the results of the scallop dredge fishery work for the 2024/2025 season. A member raised concerns regarding the impact on crab stocks because of the suction dredges and the volume of sand removed. Members discussed the issue and MMO representatives at the meeting agreed to</p>

	investigate the conditions of the license, in particular the monitoring procedures and obligations.
	Resolved –/ That the report be noted
51.	MANAGEMENT OF SCALLOP DREDGING 2025/2026
52.	MANAGEMENT OF PERMITTED INTERTIDAL AND SUB-TIDAL FIXED NET FISHERIES 2025/2026
	The Chief Officer presented a report to update members on the planned process and timelines for opening the Holderness Coast permitted intertidal and sub-tidal fixed net fisheries on 1 October 2025. It was proposed that applications for both intertidal and sub-tidal permits are opened on 30 June 2024 with a provisional closing date of 25 July 2025.
	Resolved - That the report be noted.
53.	CHIEF OFFICERS OPERATIONAL REPORT
	The Chief Officer presented a report to provide members with a comprehensive and detailed operational summary covering the period December 2024 to May 2025. The Chief Officer reflected on the build of the Authority’s new patrol vessel which commenced in February 2024 and was lifted into the water on the 8 May 2025. The vessel was officially named at a ceremony on the 21 June in Whitby, the Chief Officer alongside members thanked Sarah Murray, Operational Support Manager and Emma Jones, Operational Support Assistant for their efforts in arranging the boat naming ceremony and the officers conduct throughout the event. The Chief Officer also thanked member Authority’s for their contribution to the project, specifically East Riding of Yorkshire Council for their innovative approach to facilitate the financing of the vessel and continued support throughout the project. The Chief Officer also discussed with members the recent commercial vessel collision off the East Coast of Yorkshire on the 10 March 2025, the IFCA conduct and Operations report and its outcome and the priority work steams for the following six months which included sea trails of North Eastern Guardian IV and completion and delivery of a new 6.4m boarding RIB.
	Resolved – That the notes be received.
54.	FISHERIES STATUTES AND REGULATIONS - PROSECUTIONS
	The Clerk submitted a report on the fisheries enforcement activities taken by the Authority for the period December 2024 to May 2025. Members highlighted the importance of prosecuting cases of obstruction, if not dealt with appropriately, it could impact the enforcement culture for both the Authority’s officers and partner organisations.

	Resolved – That the notes be received.
20.	NEIFCA BYELAW UPDATE
	<p>The Chief Officer presented a report to inform Members on progress with the following byelaws which were made at a meeting of the Authority held on 1 December 2022:</p> <p>XXVIII Shellfish Permit Byelaw 2022</p> <p>The key aims of the new byelaw are to establish a new flexible management framework which will more effectively cover the exploitation of listed shellfish species throughout the NEIFCA district, both offshore and onshore. The new proposed byelaw will also consolidate existing byelaw regulations and introduce an effort management system for commercial potting within the district. Since the making of the byelaw on 1 December 2022 it has been subject to further internal quality assurance checks, informal consultation with fishing groups and wider formal statutory consultation which completed on 27 October 2023. In line with the statutory process the draft byelaw regulation and supporting documentation was sent to the Marine Management Organisation for a Quality Assurance assessment on 11 January 2024, at the time of the meeting, members were informed the byelaw was in MMO Quality Assurance stage 5, with a projected confirmation in September 2025.</p> <p>XXIX Humber Estuary Fishing Byelaw 2022</p> <p>Whilst retaining all existing management measures in relation to fishing activities within the boundaries of the Humber Estuary the new byelaw included a revision to the boundaries of an existing protected area to support the expansion of eel grass habitat. The byelaw is currently with DEFRA awaiting formal confirmation by the Minister as of 28 February 2025.</p> <p>XXXIII Beam Trawling Byelaw 2024</p> <p>At the Authority meeting held on 6 June 2024 members supported the making of a new byelaw XXXIII Beam Trawling Byelaw 2024. The key aims of the new byelaw was to replace the current emergency regulation with flexible management framework that would support the effective management of the king scallop stock from targeted beam trawling activity alongside any associated impacts on the wider environment in the medium to longer term. The draft byelaw regulation and supporting RIA was submitted to the MMO for QA stage 1 review on 13 September 2024 and was received back on 30 October 2024. Following a review both the RIA and draft byelaw documents were revised, updated and returned to the MMO for QA stage 2 review on 15 November 2024. The MMO QA review completed on 6 January 2025 and the byelaw was formally confirmed by Defra on 11 March 2025. Since confirmation the Chief Officer confirmed that the provisions of the byelaw had now been implemented and the new beam trawling permit scheme established with five permits issued for 2025.</p>
	Resolved - That the notes be received.

56.	REPORTS FROM PARTNER AGENCIES AND BODIES
	<p>Reports from the partner agencies were unavailable at the time of printing. MMO representative Christian Proud informed members that any updates from the MMO are posted through their social media channels and online.</p>
	Resolved - That the notes be received.
57.	ANY OTHER BUSINESS
	<p>Councillor David Chance provided a brief update on the current situation with the Staithes Harbour Board, a new Clerk had been appointed following the resignation of the previous Clerk.</p> <p>Clerk to the Authority, Darren Stevens informed members of his intention to leave as of the 30 November, a replacement Clerk would be appointed by ERYC in due course.</p> <p>MMO appointee Rachel Hanbury informed members that she would be leaving as of October 2025 and reflected on her 15 years as a member on the Authority and the valuable work IFCA's do.</p>
	The meeting closed at 12:30

NORTH EASTERN INSHORE FISHERIES AND CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

04 SEPTEMBER 2025

Present

Prof Mike Elliott (Chair)
 Cllr David Chance (Vice Chair)
 Cllr Tim Norman
 Mr Graham Collins
 Cllr Neil Swannick
 Cllr Rachel Creevy
 Dr Stephen Axford

Representing

MMO Appointee
 North Yorkshire Council
 East Riding of Yorkshire Council
 MMO Appointee
 North Yorkshire Council
 Hartlepool Borough Council
 MMO Appointee

Darren Stevens, Clerk, East Riding of Yorkshire Council, Liz Smith, East Riding of Yorkshire Council on behalf of David Kirven, David McCandless, NEIFCA Chief Officer and Dr Ralf Bublitz, NEIFCA Environmental & Scientific Officer also attended the meeting.

The meeting took place in County Hall, Beverley, the meeting commenced at 9.30am.

15.	APOLOGIES
	Apologies for absence received from David Kirven, Treasurer and Councillor Henry.
16.	DECLARATION OF PERSONAL OR PREJUDICIAL INTERESTS
	Resolved – The Chair asked Members to declare any personal or prejudicial interests with respect to items on the Agenda and the nature of such interests. No such interests were declared.
17.	TO TAKE NOTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 06 MARCH 2025 AS A CORRECT RECORD
	Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 06 March 2025 are approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.
18.	BUDGET MONITORING 2025/2026
	Liz Smith, East Riding of Yorkshire Council, presented a report on behalf of the Treasurer to advise Members of the budget position at the end of July (month 4) in 2025/26. The report highlighted that at the end of July 2025, the Authority had net expenditure of £437,264 against an expected £480,961, underspending by £43,697. The forecast outturn underspend was £198,098. The majority of the underspend was a consequence of minor slippage in the completion of the build of the new patrol vessel. The delay had resulted in forecast underspends of £100,000 on the finance lease with East Riding of Yorkshire Council for the period April-September 2025, a projected £18,600 underspend on vessel fuel and £44,761 surplus on bank interest as the balance in the Renewals Fund is higher than budgeted to allow for the one-off payment towards the new vessel.

	<p>Resolved – (a) That the budget monitoring forecast outturn underspend at 31 March 2026 of £198,098 be noted.</p> <p>(b) That the Treasurer and Chief Officer be approved to increase the one-off payment to East Riding of Yorkshire Council towards the new patrol vessel by up to £200,000, funded from a combination of the forecast 2025/26 outturn underspend and increased balance on the Renewals Fund at the end of 2024/25 financial year.</p> <p>(c) That the balance of any remaining underspend at outturn be transferred to the Renewals Fund.</p>
19.	STRATEGIC & OPERATIONAL RISK REGISTER REVIEW
	<p>The Clerk presented a report to inform members of the Executive Committee that in accordance with the Authority’s Risk Management Strategy, a sixth monthly review of the Strategic and Operational Risk Registers had been completed and reported for information. The Chief officer informed members that the sale of NEG III and the successful financing of NEG IV had reduced the level of financial risk, reported previously. Members suggested that operational risks relating to delays in the commissioning of the new vessel, should be captured separately. The Chief Officer agreed to action such.</p>
	<p>Resolved – That the revised Strategic and Operational Risk Register be reviewed in six months’ time.</p>
20.	NEIFCA STANDING ORDERS & FINANCIAL REGULATIONS – ANNUAL REVIEW
	<p>The Chief Officer presented a report to advise members of the completion of the annual review of NEIFCA Standing Orders and Financial Regulations alongside an updated version of the regulations for approval and adoption. Members were informed that no major changes had been made, most of the changes, detailed in section 1.2 of the report, were grammatical amendments. Members agreed that in future only substantive changes to the Standing Orders and Financial Regulations should be brought to the Executive Committee for approval going forward.</p>
	<p>Resolved – That the revised Standing Orders and Financial Regulations be approved and adopted.</p>
21.	EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC
	<p>That the public be excluded from the meeting for consideration of the following item (Minutes 22) on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information defined in paragraphs 8 and 9 of part 1 of schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.</p>
	<p>Resolved – That the public be excluded from the meeting for consideration of the following item (minutes 22)</p>
22.	NEIFCA PERMIT APPEALS – SCALLOP DREDGING
23.	NEIFCA ANNUAL AUDIT 2024/2025
	<p>The Clerk presented a report to inform members of the findings of the annual report. Members were informed that the substantial assurance level had been maintained. This level of assurance reflects that there is a sound system of governance, risk management and control exists, with internal controls operating effectively and being consistently applied to support the achievement of objectives in the area audited. Members were assured that the</p>

	recommendations made by the internal audit had already been completed and any modifications had been implemented.
	Resolved - Members noted the report.
24.	NEIFCA ANNUAL REPORT 2025/2026
	The Chief officer presented a draft copy of the NEIFCA Annual Report covering the period, 2024/2025, summarising the Authority's outputs and activities during the year. Members acknowledged the work Officers had completed throughout the year and endorsed the report for submission to Defra.
	Resolved - Members noted the report.
25.	CHIEF OFFICERS OPERATIONAL UPDATE
	The Chief Officer presented members with an operational update covering the period March to August 2025. The Chief Officer discussed the progress of the new vessel build, North Eastern Guardian IV which was formally named and blessed at a ceremony in June 2025. The Chief Officer advised that the new vessel was not currently fully operational and that formal acceptance had been delayed until all works and testing had been completed. The report also included an overview of the enforcement, compliance and Environmental work, national workstreams and priority workstreams for the following six months.
	Resolved - Members noted the report.
26.	NEIFCA HEALTH & SAFETY POLICY & SAFE WORKING PRACTICES 2025/2026 - REVIEW
	Chief Officer presented a report to inform members of the completion of the sixth monthly review of the Authority's Health & Safety provisions. Since the last review in March 2025, there had been no notable incidents or accidents to report. Members were informed that officers were currently in the process of reviewing and updating the risk assessments and associated safe working practices to incorporate new equipment and working practices associated with North Eastern Guardian IV.
	Resolved - Members noted the report.
27.	NEIFCA BYELAWS UPDATE
	The Chief Officer presented a report updating Members on progress relating to the following byelaws which were made at a meeting of the Authority held on 1 December 2022: <u>XXVIII Shellfish Permit Byelaw 2022</u> Since the making of this byelaw in December 2022, it had been subject to internal quality assurance, informal consultation and a wider formal statutory consultation which closed on the 27 October 2023. In line with the statutory process the draft byelaw regulation and supporting documentation was sent to the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) for a Quality Assurance (QA) assessment on 11 January 2024 with a recommendation that it be further considered for formal confirmation by Defra. The draft regulation and its supporting RIA had subsequently gone through six phases of QA checking with the MMO and on 9 July 2025 it was finally submitted to Defra for formal confirmation. On 8 August 2025 Defra advised that it had been passed onto the Ministerial department for final review and signing.

	<p><u>XXIX Humber Estuary Fishing Byelaw 2022</u></p> <p>This byelaw was submitted to Defra in February 2025 for formal confirmation, on the 7 August 2025 officers received written confirmation from Defra that the byelaw had been signed by the Fisheries Minister on 28 July 2025. The provisions of the new byelaw regulation were now being implemented.</p>
	Resolved - Members noted the report.
28.	ANY OTHER BUSINESS
	<p>Cllr Chance requested that the vacancy on the Staithes Harbour board be filled. The Clerk, Darrent Stevens thanked the Authority and its members for their time and efforts as it was the last meeting he would be attending as Clerk.</p>
	The meeting closed at 12:10pm

DRAFT

NORTH EASTERN INSHORE FISHERIES AND CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

Report to: Authority Meeting
4 December 2025

BUDGET MONITORING 2025/26

Report by the Treasurer

A. Purpose of Report

To advise Members of the budget position at the end of October (month 7) in 2025/26.

B. Recommendations

- i. That the budget monitoring forecast outturn underspend at 31 March 2026 of £347,940 is noted.
- ii. That the Chief Officer is approved to increase the one-off payment to East Riding of Yorkshire Council towards the new patrol vessel by up to £350,000, funded from a combination of the forecast 2025/26 outturn underspend (£290,178) and increased balance on the Renewals Fund at the end of 2024/25 financial year (£59,822).
- iii. That forecast £57,762 remaining underspend at outturn be transferred to the Renewals Fund.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 A detailed budget monitoring exercise is undertaken monthly by the Treasurer in consultation with the Chief Officer. This analyses individual budget lines in terms of the current expenditure and allows for projections to the end of the financial year.
- 1.2 This report provides the overall position and any areas whereby an explanation is required of any notable variance on the Authority's spending to the end of October 2025.
- 1.3 At its meeting on 5 December 2024, the Authority set the levy for the North Eastern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority at £1,712,499 for 2025/26.

2. Revenue Expenditure to 31 October 2025

- 2.1 Appendix A summarises the expenditure and income for the Authority for the seven months to October of the financial year and compares it with the budget. The appendix shows both subjective and objective net expenditure for the period.

- 2.2 At the end of October 2025, the Authority has net expenditure of £719,239 against an expected £810,168 underspending by £90,929. The forecast outturn underspend is £347,940. The majority of the underspend is a consequence of slippage in the completion of the build of the new patrol vessel. The new build is technically complex requiring close interplay with a wide range of associated suppliers and technicians which has caused a short delay in the completion of trials, sign off and formal acceptance. NEIFCA Officers have been working closely with the contractor to resolve all technical issues and complete sea trials to full satisfaction. Due to disruption in global supply chains there have also been some delays in delivery of parts during the build. Formal completion, acceptance and sign off is now expected before the end of December 2025.
- 2.3 The delay has resulted in forecast underspends of £150,000 on the finance lease with East Riding of Yorkshire Council for the period April-December 2025, a projected £18,600 underspend on vessel fuel and £57,500 surplus on bank interest as the balance in the Renewals Fund is higher than budgeted to allow for the one-off payment towards the new vessel.
- 2.4 The forecast underspend has increased by a further £80,000 following notification in November 2025 of the award of additional Defra 'grant in aid', made up of £50,000 allocated to support the Marine Protected Area and delivery towards 'good environmental status' and £30,000 towards Marine Sustainable Development.
- 2.5 A Special Authority Meeting on 30 June 2023 approved the procurement of the new patrol vessel partly financed by a one-off payment from NEIFCA in year one ranging between £2,900,000 and £3,300,000. The one-off payment is funded from the Renewals Fund and includes proceeds from the sale of the North East Guardian III. It was also agreed that the remaining balance would be funded from Defra capital grant and borrowing from the Public Works Loan Board via a finance lease with East Riding of Yorkshire Council.
- 2.6 The NEIFCA one-off payment is currently budgeted at £2,774,220. The balance available in the Renewals Fund for the patrol vessel replacement has increased by £59,822 to £2,834,042 as at 31 March 2025 and reported in the Financial Outturn 2024/25 (Authority meeting on 26 June 2025). It was agreed at the Executive meeting on 4 September 2025 that this increase in available funding is utilised, along with 2025/26 revenue budget savings generated as a consequence of the delay in the completion of the patrol vessel build to increase the one-off payment to East Riding of Yorkshire Council by up to £200,000, minimising the cost of borrowing through the finance lease. Due to the increase in the forecast underspend it is proposed to further increase the payment by an additional £150,000 up to £350,000. The table below shows the forecast Renewals fund reserve movements for 2025/26 and 2026/27.

Renewals Fund	2025/26	2026-27
	<u>£</u>	<u>£</u>
Balance brought forward	<u>3,125,241</u>	<u>239,659</u>
Annual Contribution Vessel Replacement	102,900	102,900
Residual Forecast Underspend 25/26	<u>57,762</u>	<u>0</u>
Transfer from Revenue	<u>160,662</u>	<u>102,900</u>
Patrol Vessel Replacement revenue costs	-8,500	-8,500
Patrol Vessel One-off payment to ERYC	-2,834,042	0
Boarding RHIB capital expenditure	<u>-203,702</u>	<u>0</u>
Transfer to Revenue	<u>-3,046,244</u>	<u>-8,500</u>
Balance carried forward	<u><u>239,659</u></u>	<u><u>334,059</u></u>
Analysis of Closing Balance		
Boarding RHIB funding remaining	78,997	78,997
Future Vessel Replacement	160,662	263,562
	<u><u>239,659</u></u>	<u><u>342,559</u></u>

2.7 The forecast underspend also includes £50,000 additional income for work undertaken by the Chief Officer and Environmental Manager towards the development and implementation of Fisheries Management Plans during 2025/26 which has been funded by Defra 'grant in aid'.

2.7 The main variances in the forecast outturn are:

- Employee underspends of £23,028 – mainly due to a combination of savings from short term vacancies which have been or will be recruited to and a forecast £15,036 underspend on standby allowances. The forecast includes the cost of the 3.2% Local Government pay award for 2025-26 at an additional annual cost of £11,000 compared to the budgeted 2%.
- Patrol vessel running costs – forecast underspend of £52,949 due to a £150,000 underspend on the finance lease for the first half of 2025/26 and £18,600 projected underspends on fuel as detailed in paragraph 2.3 offset by £116,401 expenditure on the build of the Boarding Rigid Hull Inflatable Boat, funded by the Renewals Fund.
- Supplies and services – the forecast includes £13,247 expenditure on the purchase of an automated Conductivity Temperature Depth (CTD) System

approved to be funded from the External Projects reserve at the Authority meeting on 26 June 2025.

- Grants & Contributions - £122,395 underspend due to £50,000 additional income for work undertaken in the delivery of Fisheries Management Plan work funded by Defra 'grant in aid' and £80,000 additional Defra grants as outlined in paragraph 2.4 above. There is also a £6,055 forecast deficit from reclaiming fuel duty which is offset by reduced expenditure on fuel and £1,000 shortfall on fixed penalty income.
- Other income - £41,500 overachievement mainly due to £57,500 bank interest due to increases in the level of reserves being set aside for the patrol vessel replacement . This will not be a reoccurring underspend as the majority of the reserves will be utilised to fund the new patrol vessel during 2025/26 financial year. There is a £14,170 forecast deficit on permit income due to delays in the implementation of the new Commercial and Recreational permitting scheme. The byelaw has been prepared and is awaiting approval by central government.
- Contribution from reserves - £129,800 underspend due to the approval of supplementary budgets to fund the build of the Boarding Rigid Inflatable Boat and automated Conductivity Temperature Depth (CTD) System outlined above.

Contact Officer

Liz Smith (liz.smith@eastriding.gov.uk)
Principal Accountant, East Riding of Yorkshire Council

David Kirven
Treasurer

NEIFCA Budget Monitoring Report as at October 2025

	<i>Approved Budget</i>	<i>Profiled Budget to Month 7</i>	<i>Actual to Month 7</i>	<i>Variance to Profile</i>	<i>Outturn</i>	<i>Variance to Budget</i>
	£	£	£	£	£	£
EXPENDITURE						
Employee Expenses						
Pay,NI and Superannuation	926,460	540,435	531,069	-9,366	903,059	-23,401
Other Employee Costs	21,000	12,250	11,103	-1,147	21,373	373
Premises	18,030	13,238	17,340	4,102	23,730	5,700
Transport						
Patrol Vessel Running Costs	432,460	206,567	164,893	-41,674	379,511	-52,949
Vehicle Running Costs	31,350	18,288	20,932	2,645	30,425	-925
Travel and Subsistence	13,520	7,887	8,781	894	15,839	2,319
Supplies and Services	146,010	91,336	75,663	-15,673	160,649	14,639
Support Services	120,410	0	-1,847	-1,847	120,410	0
	1,709,240	890,000	827,934	-62,066	1,654,997	-54,243
INCOME						
Grants and Contributions	-70,110	-61,731	-52,935	8,796	-192,505	-122,395
Other Income	-31,030	-18,101	-55,759	-37,658	-72,530	-41,500
	-101,140	-79,832	-108,694	-28,863	-265,035	-163,895
NET EXPENDITURE	1,608,100	810,168	719,239	-90,929	1,389,962	-218,138

	<i>Approved Budget</i>	<i>Profiled Budget to Month 7</i>	<i>Actual to Month 7</i>	<i>Variance</i>	<i>Outturn</i>	<i>Variance to Forecast</i>
	£	£	£		£	
NET EXPENDITURE						
Central / Headquarters	452,210	178,880	151,970	-26,910	374,302	-77,908
Land Based Operations	150,210	87,623	91,493	3,870	152,549	2,339
Offshore Operations	857,900	457,461	344,419	-113,042	653,118	-204,782
Environment	153,450	89,513	104,185	14,673	151,692	-1,758
Grant Aided Projects	-14,170	-8,266	-50,000	-41,734	-80,000	-65,830
Patrol Vessel Replacement	8,500	4,958	77,173	72,215	138,301	129,801
	1,608,100	810,168	719,239	-90,929	1,389,962	-218,138

	<i>Approved Budget</i>	<i>Profiled Budget to Month 7</i>	<i>Actual to Month 7</i>	<i>Variance</i>	<i>Outturn</i>	<i>Variance to Forecast</i>
	£	£	£		£	
REPRESENTED BY						
Annual levy on Local Authorities	-1,712,500	-1,712,500	-1,712,499	1	-1,712,499	1
Contribution from Reserves	-8,500	-4,250	-77,173	-72,923	-138,301	-129,801
Contribution to Vehicle Replacement	10,000	0	0	0	10,000	0
Contribution to Renewals Fund	102,900	0	0	0	102,900	0
	-1,608,100	-1,716,750	-1,789,673	-72,923	-1,737,901	-129,801

NORTH EASTERN INSHORE FISHERIES AND CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

Report to: Authority Meeting
4 December 2025

LEVY 2026/27 TO 2028/29

Report by the Treasurer

A. Purpose of Report

To determine the levy on member local authorities for 2026/27.

To highlight issues relating to the setting of the levy for 2027/28 and 2028/29.

B. Recommendations

- (i) That the proposed 3% levy increase for 2026/27 be approved by the Authority and the Clerk be authorised to issue demands on the relevant local authorities as presented at Appendix A.
- (ii) That the Authority acknowledges the issues affecting NEIFCA and their effect upon the levy for 2027/28 and 2028/29.
- (iii) That a detailed budget for 2026/27 be brought to the Authority for approval at the Executive meeting in March 2026.

1. Background

- 1.1 NEIFCA is a statutory body, made by Order on 1 October 2010 and vested with its full powers on 1 April 2011. Article 16 of the Order sets out that ‘the expenses incurred by the Authority must be defrayed by the relevant councils’, therefore NEIFCA has levying powers on the relevant councils. The relevant councils and the proportion of expenses that each must bear are set out in the Order and are shown at Appendix A.
- 1.2 In accordance with standing orders, all precepts or orders for the payment of money which the Authority from time to time may issue to respective councils shall require the consent of the majority of the council representatives attending such meeting.
- 1.3 Any motion to veto the total amount of expenses incurred by the Authority, must be sent in writing to the Clerk at least three clear working days before the meeting of the Authority. The Authority must give notice in writing of that motion to each Council member.

2. Levy Considerations and Proposals

- 2.1 At its meeting on 5 December 2024, the Authority agreed to increase the levy for the 2025/26 financial year by 11.5% to a total of £1,712,499 (Minute 29 refers). The increase was the final year of a phased increase to fund the additional cost of the annual finance lease repayment for the build and commission of a new 24.5m Fisheries Patrol/Research vessel due to be operational in 2025. An indicative increase of 2% in 2026/27 and 2% in 2027/28 was proposed but not agreed. The levy was fixed for the period 2011/12 to 2016/17 and increased for the cost of inflationary increases in pay and other costs from 2017/18 to 2023/24.
- 2.2 The Bank of England's Monetary Policy committee reported that CPI inflation is judged to have peaked at 3.8% in September and is forecast to reduce to 3.2% by March 2026, due to previous increases in energy prices dropping out of the calculation. The bank predict that inflation will fall back to around the 2% target in the medium term. The committee voted to hold interest rates at 4% but acknowledged that borrowing costs are likely to continue to follow a gradual downward path during the next year. NEIFCA is continuing to experience the effects of inflation as a cost pressure on wages, vessel and vehicle insurance and other supplies.
- 2.3 The National Joint Council (NJC) Local Government Pay Award for 2025/26 was agreed at 3.2% for all scale points. The pay award was higher than the anticipated 2% when the 2025/26 levy was set. It is forecast that the pay award will be 3% in 2026/27 reducing to 2% in 2027/28 and 2028/29. The pay award and inflationary pressures require a levy increase of 3% in 2026/27.
- 2.4 A Special Authority Meeting on 30 June 2023 approved the procurement of the new patrol vessel partly financed by a one-off payment from NEIFCA in year one. The one-off payment is funded from the Renewals Fund and includes proceeds from the sale of the North East Guardian III. It was also agreed that the remaining balance would be funded from Defra capital grant and borrowing from the Public Works Loan Board via a finance lease with East Riding of Yorkshire Council. The build is almost complete and formal acceptance of the vessel is anticipated in the coming weeks.
- 2.5 The forecast annual finance lease repayment has been reviewed, and remains £201,100 based on the latest build costs and forecast balance in the Renewals Fund as at 31 March 2025 which includes the proceeds from the sale of the North-East Guardian III.
- 2.6 In putting forward these proposals the Clerk, Treasurer and Chief Officer are mindful that authorities are facing financial pressures of their own, in particular the pressure from higher employee costs, funding constraints and increasing demand for public services. The current outlook remains uncertain for local government due to reduced income from fees and charges due to the increase in cost of living, inflationary pressures and delays in the reform of local government funding. With this in mind Members are asked to consider the proposed 3% levy increase for 2026/27 as shown in Appendix A. In seeking this increase the Authority commits to undertake a further review for the 2027/28 levy when the costs of operating the new vessel will be clearer.

3. Reserves

- 3.1 The NEIFCA General Reserve is forecast to be £228,450 as at 31 March 2027 (Appendix B).

3.2 A summary showing the forecast balance on the Renewals Fund at 31 March 2027 is shown below:

Renewals Fund	2025/26	2026-27
	<u>£</u>	<u>£</u>
Balance brought forward	<u>3,125,241</u>	<u>239,659</u>
Annual Contribution Vessel Replacement	102,900	102,900
Residual Forecast Underspend 25/26	<u>57,762</u>	<u>0</u>
Transfer from Revenue	<u>160,662</u>	<u>102,900</u>
Patrol Vessel Replacement revenue costs	-8,500	-8,500
Patrol Vessel One-off payment to ERYC	-2,834,042	0
Boarding RHIB capital expenditure	<u>-203,702</u>	<u>0</u>
Transfer to Revenue	<u>-3,046,244</u>	<u>-8,500</u>
Balance carried forward	<u>239,659</u>	<u>334,059</u>
Analysis of Closing Balance		
Boarding RHIB funding remaining	78,997	78,997
Future Vessel Replacement	160,662	263,562
	<u>239,659</u>	<u>342,559</u>

3.3 It is anticipated that £3,046,244 will be utilised during 2025/26 to fund the one-off payment towards the finance lease for the new patrol vessel, the commission and build of the 6.5m Boarding Rigid Hulled Inflatable Boat (RHIB) and revenue costs of the vessel replacement programme. Assuming that £290,178 of the forecast outturn underspend at October 2025 is approved to be utilised during 2025/26 to increase the one-off payment for the new patrol vessel, and the £57,762 residual underspend is approved to be transferred to the Renewals Fund at the financial year end, the balance on the Renewals reserve at 31 March 2026 is forecast to be £239,659.

3.4 The 2026/27 Levy proposals also include a contribution to the Renewals Fund of £102,900 for the future replacement of a new main vessel at the end of its useful life in 2045. The forecast reserve balance at 31 March 2027 is £342,559 and consists of £78,997 remaining funding set aside for the Boarding RHIB and £263,562 for future vessel replacement costs.

Contact Officer

Liz Smith (liz.smith@eastriding.gov.uk)
Principal Accountant, East Riding of Yorkshire Council

David Kirven
Treasurer

NORTH EASTERN INSHORE FISHERIES AND CONSERVATION AUTHORITY LEVY 2026/27

Appendix A

LOCAL AUTHORITY	Allocation	2025/26 Levy	2026/27 Levy	Increase in 2026/27 Levy	Increase in 2026/27 Levy	2027/28 Levy	Increase in 2027/28 Levy	Increase in 2027/28 Levy	2028/29 Levy	Increase in 2028/29 Levy	Increase in 2028/29 Levy
	%	£	£	£	%	£	£	%	£	£	%
Durham County Council	5.56	95,215	98,071	2,856	3.0	100,023	1,952	2.0	102,023	2,001	2.0%
East Riding of Yorkshire Council	22.22	380,518	391,933	11,416	3.0	399,733	7,800	2.0	407,727	7,995	2.0%
Hartlepool Borough Council	2.77	47,436	48,860	1,423	3.0	49,832	972	2.0	50,828	997	2.0%
Hull City Council	11.11	190,258	195,966	5,708	3.0	199,866	3,900	2.0	203,863	3,997	2.0%
North East Lincolnshire Council	11.11	190,258	195,966	5,708	3.0	199,866	3,900	2.0	203,863	3,997	2.0%
North Lincolnshire Council	5.56	95,215	98,071	2,856	3.0	100,023	1,952	2.0	102,023	2,001	2.0%
North Yorkshire County Council	22.22	380,518	391,933	11,416	3.0	399,733	7,800	2.0	407,727	7,995	2.0%
Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council	2.77	47,436	48,860	1,423	3.0	49,832	972	2.0	50,828	997	2.0%
South Tyneside Metropolitan Borough Council	5.56	95,215	98,071	2,856	3.0	100,023	1,952	2.0	102,023	2,001	2.0%
Stockton on Tees Borough Council	5.56	95,215	98,071	2,856	3.0	100,023	1,952	2.0	102,023	2,001	2.0%
Sunderland City Council	5.56	95,215	98,071	2,856	3.0	100,023	1,952	2.0	102,023	2,001	2.0%
		1,712,499	1,763,873	51,375	3.0	1,798,974	35,101	2.0	1,834,954	35,980	2.0%

NORTH EASTERN INSHORE FISHERIES AND CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

RESERVES

General Reserve	2025/26	2026/27
	£	£
Balance brought forward	228,450	228,450
Transfer from Revenue	0	0
Transfer to Revenue	0	0
Balance carried forward	<u>228,450</u>	<u>228,450</u>
Patrol Vessel Maintenance	2025/26	2026/27
	£	£
Balance brought forward	50,000	50,000
Transfer from Revenue	0	0
Transfer to Revenue	0	0
Balance carried forward	<u>50,000</u>	<u>50,000</u>
External Projects	2025/26	2026/27
	£	£
Balance brought forward	13,750	0
Transfer from Revenue	0	0
Transfer to Revenue	-13,750	0
Balance carried forward	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
Vehicle Replacement Reserve	2025/26	2026/27
	£	£
Balance brought forward	42,782	52,782
Transfer from Revenue	10,000	10,000
Transfer to Revenue	0	-30,000
Balance carried forward	<u>52,782</u>	<u>32,782</u>
Renewals Fund	2025/26	2026/27
	£	£
Balance brought forward	3,125,241	239,659
Transfer from Revenue	160,662	102,900
Transfer to Revenue	-3,046,244	0
Balance carried forward	<u>239,659</u>	<u>342,559</u>
TOTAL USEABLE RESERVES	<u>570,891</u>	<u>653,791</u>

NORTH EASTERN INSHORE FISHERIES AND CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

Report to: Authority Meeting
4 December 2025

NEIFCA Byelaws Update

Report by the Chief Officer

A. Purpose of Report

1. To update Members on progress with the following byelaws which were made at a meeting of the Authority held on 1 December 2022:

XXVIII Shellfish Permit Byelaw 2022

XXIX Humber Estuary Fishing Byelaw 2022

B. Recommendation

1. That members receive the update and note the report.
2. That members support a recommendation that 209 (189 + 10% contingency) Commercial Permits be made available in the year one of implementation of the Shellfish Permit byelaw following confirmation by Defra.

1. Background**1.1 *XXVIII Shellfish Permit Byelaw 2022***

- 1.1.1 At the Authority meeting held on 1 December 2022 members supported the making of a new byelaw XXVIII Shellfish Permit Byelaw 2022 (Minute Item 32 refers).

The key aims of the new byelaw are to establish a new flexible management framework which will more effectively cover the exploitation of listed shellfish species throughout the NEIFCA district, both offshore and onshore. The new proposed byelaw will also consolidate existing byelaw regulations and introduce an effort management system for commercial potting within the district. The provisions contained within the byelaw will be applied via conditions attached to the permit which can be varied following an appropriate review process, without the need to formally remake the whole byelaw. Two permitting schemes will be established, 'Commercial' for licensed commercial vessels and 'Recreational' for recreational operators.

It was proposed, when the byelaw was made in 2022, that a maximum of 234 Commercial Permits would be offered and permit holders restricted to working a maximum of 1000 pots. Since 2022 the number of commercial potting vessels has dropped from 209 to 188 so it is now recommended that a maximum of 209 Commercial Permits be made available, in year one, when the byelaw is confirmed by Defra. A permit charge would also be levied for Commercial Permits linked to the number of pots worked. The number of Recreational Permits offered will remain unrestricted but a new £10 charge would be levied, and the

number of pots permitted reduced from 10 to 5 per permit holder with daily bag limits remaining unchanged at 2 lobsters, 10 crabs and 30 whelks per day.

1.1.2 Since the making of the byelaw on 1 December 2022 it has been subject to an internal quality assurance check, informal consultation with fishing groups and wider formal statutory consultation which completed on 27 October 2023.

1.1.3 During this process the following adjustments were made to the draft byelaw regulation:

- Prior to the commencement of formal consultation the scope of the byelaw was widened to include, European green crab, mussel, common periwinkle, pullet carpet shell, Norway Lobster, razor clam and scallop. This was felt prudent and necessary to improve the active management of intertidal shore gathering by large ethnic groups which has become an increasing issue in some areas of the NEIFCA district.
- Prior to formal consultation additional provisions were also added to allow for the varying of fees and charges and the implementation of management by ‘pot type’ alongside a further provision clarifying that, in terms of Commercial Permit applications, first priority would be given to those vessels who held a permit on 1 December 2022.
- The supporting Regulatory Impact Assessments were also updated to include some additional information from the 2023 shellfish landings report and intertidal shore gathering.

1.1.4 Following the completion of the formal statutory consultation process on 27 October 2023 the outcome was presented to members, alongside the proposed next steps, at the Authority meeting held on 8 December 2023 (Minute 75 refers). The outcome was published on the NEIFCA website on 11 January 2024 and stakeholders notified via email.

1.1.5 In line with the statutory process the draft byelaw regulation and supporting documentation was sent to the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) for a Quality Assurance (QA) assessment on 11 January 2024 with a recommendation that it be further considered for formal confirmation by Defra. The draft regulation and its supporting RIA have subsequently gone through six phases of QA checking with the MMO and on 9 July 2025 it was finally submitted to Defra for formal confirmation. On 8 August 2025 Defra advised that it had been passed onto the Ministerial department for final review and signing.

1.2 *XXIX Humber Estuary Fishing Byelaw 2022*

1.2.1 At the Authority meeting held on 1 December 2022 members supported the making of a new byelaw XXIX Humber Estuary Fishing Byelaw 2022 (Minute Item 31 refers).

1.2.2 Whilst retaining all existing management measures in relation to fishing activities within the boundaries of the Humber Estuary the new byelaw included a revision to the boundaries of an existing protected area to support the expansion of eel grass habitat.

1.2.3 Following completion of the statutory consultation process on 27 October 2023 the outcome was presented to members, alongside the proposed next steps, at the Authority meeting held on 8 December 2023 (Minute 75 refers). The outcome was published on the NEIFCA website on 11 January 2024 and stakeholders notified via email.

1.2.4 In line with the statutory process the draft byelaw regulation and supporting documentation was also sent to the Marine Management Organisation for a Quality Assurance (QA) assessment on 11 January 2024 with a recommendation that it be further considered for formal confirmation by Defra. The draft regulation and its supporting RIA have subsequently gone through four phases of QA checking with the MMO and on 28 February 2025 it was submitted to Defra for formal confirmation. On 7 August 2025 officers received written

confirmation from Defra that the byelaw had been signed by the Fisheries Minister on 28 July 2025.

- 1.2.5 The provisions of the new byelaw regulation have now been implemented, and a copy of the new regulation is attached to this report for members' information.

1.3 **Summary Update**

1.3.1 **XXVIII Shellfish Permit Byelaw 2022**

Made on 1 December 2022. As of 13 August 2025, the byelaw is with the Ministerial department in Defra awaiting formal confirmation.

1.3.2 ***XXIX Humber Estuary Fishing Byelaw 2022***

Made on 1 December 2022 and confirmed by the Fisheries Minister on 28 July 2025.

Contact Officer

David McCandless, Chief Officer

Ext. 3690

NORTH EASTERN INSHORE FISHERIES AND CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

Report to: Authority Meeting
4 December 2025

Chief Officer's Operational Update

Report of the Chief Officer

A. **Purpose of Report**

To provide members with an operational report covering the period 1 June 2025 to 30 November 2025.

B. **Recommendation**

That Members note the report.

1. **Overview**

1.1 **NEIFCA**

New Vessel Build

Following the award of contract to Whitby based shipbuilders, Parkol Marine Ltd, on 6 October 2023, to build and commission a new vessel to replace North Eastern Guardian III, fabrication 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.

Throughout May 2025 finishing work continued on the vessel including the completion of painting, wiring and the installation of electronic equipment and deck machinery including the hydraulic after 'A' frame and the deck crane.

North Eastern Guardian IV was formally named and blessed at a quayside ceremony held at the Parkol shipyard in Whitby, North Yorkshire on Saturday 21 June 2025.

At the time of writing this report North Eastern Guardian IV is not yet fully operational with ongoing equipment commissioning, testing and adjustment, focused primarily on the anchoring, air conditioning and steering/navigational systems. These post-construction works have taken much longer than expected due in part to the complexity of the build and onboard systems and the degree of associated, specialist sub-contractor involvement.



Official launch day 8 May 2025



Naming & blessing ceremony 21 June 2025

Enforcement & Compliance Work

The weather throughout the spring and summer reporting period has been generally settled, warm and dry throughout, enabling fishing activity, both recreational and commercial to operate largely without restriction. Catch reports were generally good from most ports with lobster fetching between £10 and £16 per Kg and edible crab £1.80 to £2.20 per Kg.

Throughout the later spring period, May into June, there were some excellent reports from the recreational angling sector both onshore and at sea. Onshore there were some very good catches of smooth hound, ray and sea bass particularly along the East Yorkshire coast

and offshore, cod and ling from known wreck marks, particularly off the North Yorkshire coast.

During the later summer some large blue-fin tuna were caught off the Whitby coast by charter vessels with recreational permits issued by Defra. Approximately ten such permits were issued for 2025 to local vessels from our region. The presence of these large tuna has however attracted the attention of a number of unregulated vessel operators, raising concerns about negative impacts on this emergent fishery. Many such vessel are ill-equipped to catch and handle such large fish which is likely to lead to increased mortality and the potential ‘wash up’ of carcasses. NEIFCA officers have been working closely with MMO colleagues to both monitor the fishery and plan for 2026.

From a compliance perspective, issues relating to the landing of soft-shelled lobster, undersize lobster and the illegal scrubbing of egg bearing lobsters were most prevalent throughout the reporting period. One other key issue observed, particularly during August, related to high levels of unregulated intertidal shore gathering activity at Redcar. This primarily involved the targeting of pullet carpet shells which are not currently subject to any NEIFCA byelaw provisions so cannot be formally regulated. The new shellfish permit byelaw will eventually provide the means to more formally regulate. Primary concerns related to habitat disturbance and the localised depletion of biodiversity.

Environmental & Scientific Work

The Environmental and Scientific team maintained its focus on collecting data both at the quayside and at sea across various fisheries. This included monitoring the intertidal fixed net fishery, conducting quayside sampling and undertaking observer trips aboard potting vessels targeting lobster and crab, as well as beam trawling vessels for scallops and associated bycatch. Additional efforts were directed toward completing the appropriate assessment for the Holderness Inshore Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ) and the Greater Wash Special Protection Area (SPA). Monthly sea temperature recordings resumed in July, and from October, a new probe was deployed to capture a wider range of parameters, including chlorophyll-a, oxygen, salinity, pH, and turbidity. During October and November, active sampling and monitoring of permitted intertidal fixed net and scallop dredge fisheries began, alongside biometric measurements of seabass and trials of a new net tracking system. Due to ongoing issues with the MMO’s iVMS vessel tracking system, several IFCA’s have adopted alternative tracking solutions. In response, the Environmental and Scientific team has initiated a trial of this new system.

Staffing & Recruitment

During May and June two new staff were recruited into the offshore operational team and during October one of NEIFCA’s longstanding staff members, John Mallette, retired from his role following 18 years’ service in the offshore operational team. The vacancy resulting from John’s retirement was filled by Dean Grason, an experienced member of the NEIFCA shore operational team, and a recruitment process is underway to fill his vacant post.

1.2 National Work Streams

IFCA Conduct and Operations Report

Every four years there is a statutory requirement under Section 183 of the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 for the Secretary of State to ‘lay’ a report to Parliament on the

conduct and operations of IFCAs. The third such report, covering the period 2018 to 2022, was published by Defra on 6 February 2025 and copies were included in the information circulated in advance of both the March Executive Committee meeting and the June Authority meeting 2025.

In response to the recommendations contained within the report IFCA Chief Officers have established a joint implementation group in collaboration with Defra. The Conduct and Operations Report Recommendations Implementation Steering group (CORRIS) has met three times, developed an action plan and commissioned some bespoke pieces of work to address some of the key issues identified within the report. The timing of this 2018 to 2022 report has been significantly delayed and the next statutory report will be due in 2026 but the CORRIS work will continue feed into the associated process.

Fisheries Management plans

On 14 December 2024 Defra published 5 Fisheries Management Plans (FMPs) including crab and lobster, sea bass, king scallop, whelk and Channel non-quota species. The development of FMPs is a key component of the 2020 Fisheries Act to inform future fisheries management policy delivery across a range of exploited stocks in the UK. The FMP programme has now expanded across some 40 plans covering a wide range of species.

NEIFCA staff are directly involved in two of the current, national FMP implementation groups including crab and lobster and king scallop. For the Crab and Lobster FMP, officers contribute to the steering group as well as the science and implementation sub-groups, with current priorities including the introduction of an increased Minimum Conservation Reference Size for lobsters in 2026 and exploring potential management measures for edible crabs. In collaboration with Northumberland IFCA, NEIFCA is also assessing the feasibility of a pilot scheme in the North East to trial fine-scale management approaches for the region. For the King Scallop FMP, NEIFCA serves as the lead organisation, focusing on developing management measures for offshore areas.

1.3 Priority Work streams for the next six months

- Operationalisation of the new vessel including the training and integration of two new staff members.
- Completion of the build and delivery of the new 6.4m boarding RIB and integration with NEG IV.
- Implementation of the shellfish permit byelaw.
- In terms of biometric survey work, prioritising potting, scallop dredging and permitted intertidal net fisheries
- Development and commissioning of the new fisheries database to accommodate the administration of the new shellfish permit byelaw regulation.

1.4 Summary of meetings and events attended

National Association of IFCAs	3 rd June 2025
Defra, MMO, IFCA DMA workshop	3 rd June 2025

IFCA Chief Officers Group meeting	4 th June 2025
Shellfish Association of Great Britain annual conference	10 & 11 June 2025
National Seawork exhibition, Southampton	10 th to 13 th June 2025
HBDSEG benthic sub-group meeting	12 th June 2025
Tees River Trust mussel stock assessment meeting	13 th June 2025
Tees River Trust mussel stock meeting with NE	20 th June 2025
IFCA MMO Strategic Operations Group	23 rd June 2025
Whelk FMP permit scheme meeting	24 th June 2025
King Scallop FMP Implementation Group	30 th June 2025
NFFO FLO workshop	3 rd July 2025
IFCA TAG Conference	7 th to 9 th July 2025
IFCA Chief Officers Group meeting	16 th July 2025
Association of IFCAs directors meeting	16 th July 2025
MMO and IFCA joint meeting MPA assessment	21 st July 2025
CFRONT fisheries permitting database meeting	23 rd July 2025
Cleanplanet Uk meeting	23 rd July 2025
King Scallop FMP Implementation Group	28 th July 2025
Eastern Green Link 5 meeting	29 th July 2025
Crab and lobster KMP implementation group meeting	29 th July 2025
IFCA Chief Officers Group meeting	6 th August 2025
Angling Trust meeting recreational charter fishing	6 th August 2025
King Scallop FMP Implementation Group	12 th August 2025
CEFAS bass tagging meeting	18 th August 2025
MMO/IFCA porpoise bycatch management meeting	27 th August 2025
Association of IFCAs members forum	2 nd September 2025
IFCA Chief Officers Group meeting	8 th September 2025

MMO/IFCA fishing industry group meeting, Bridlington	10 th September 2025
MMO/IFCA fishing industry group meeting, Hartlepool	11 th September 2025
Yorkshire Marine & Coastal Biodiversity Group	12 th September 2025
NEIFCA permitted intertidal netsmens meeting	17 th September 2025
YNYCA route map Marine & Coastal workshop	17 th September 2025
East Coast Marine plan meeting	18 th September 2025
NEIFCA Senior Management Team meeting	24 th September 2025
Yorkshire Marine Nature Partnership MPA management	6 th October 2025
IFCA Chief Officers Group Meeting	8 th October 2025
Defra Marine & Fisheries Chief Officers Group (MAFCO)	9 th October 2025
New vessel build meeting	9 th October 2025
ICES Scallop Working Group	7 th to 9 th October 2025
NEIFCA/RSPB meeting	13 th October 2025
Yorkshire Marine Nature Partnership catch up	16 th October 2025
Staithes Harbour Board elections, invigilating	18 th October 2025
IFCA/MMO Strategic Operations Group (SOG)	20 th October 2025
NEIFCA staffing meeting	21 st October 2025
King Scallop FMP working group workshop, Newcastle	22 nd October 2025
Morven Hawthorn Pit Grid connection project	23 rd October 2025
HBDSEG benthic sub-group meeting	24 th October 2025
Recar & Cleveland Council Environmental & Climate Change Scrutiny Committee	27 th October 2025
Heritage Coast Annual Forum event	29 th October 2025
IFCA Technical Advisory Group (TAG)	4 th November 2025
Crab & Lobster science FMP group	5 th November 2025
WWG 2025 autumn meeting	6 th November 2025
NEPHROPS UKFS	6 th November 2025

AIFCA briefing	11 th November 2025
IFCA Chief Officers Group meeting	12 th November 2025
MMO/NEIFCA industry meetings Hornsea, Withernsea	12 th November 2025
King Scallop FMP working group	13 th November 2025
New vessel meeting	13 th November 2025
Defra/IFCA FMP implementation workshop, London	17 th November 2025
MMO/IFCA English offshore MPA meeting	20 th November 2025
MMO/NEIFCA industry meeting Whitby	20 th November 2025
DEFRA FMP crab effort project meeting	20 th November 2025
NE/NEIFCA regional catch up meeting	21 st November 2025
Seafish Scallop Science Group	24 th November 2025
ARIA workshop, York University	25 th November 2025
SAGB AGM meeting	25 th November 2025
Crab & Lobster FMP implementation group	1 st December 2025

2.0 **NEIFCA Operational Reports**

2.1 **Land-based Work streams**

The shore enforcement team maintained a rigorous schedule of land and sea patrols across the NEIFCA district, prioritizing compliance with local IFCA byelaws and national legislation while strengthening engagement with the fishing industry. In addition to routine patrols, inspections, and boardings, officers concentrated on addressing the unregulated removal of shellfish and molluscs from intertidal zones, particularly around Redcar. Their approach combined proactive engagement, ongoing monitoring, and enforcement action where necessary.

Nomadic scallop dredging activity remained at low levels throughout the period, outside the NEIFCA district and mainly off the coast of Scarborough to Flamborough Head. Most of these vessels landed into the ports of Scarborough, Whitby, Hartlepool. Throughout the period Officers maintained active engagement with these vessels making operators aware of the associated legislation while transiting through the NEIFCA District.

The shore enforcement team primarily carried out intelligence-led inspections, complemented by routine compliance checks across the district's ports, marinas, and harbours. These activities included engaging with the fishing industry to provide education and clear guidance on current fisheries byelaws and national legislation. Particular emphasis was placed on enforcing minimum conservation reference sizes and byelaws relating to fish

and shellfish. In October, NEIFCA officers collaborated closely with Northumberland IFCA and Northumberland Marine Police to tackle illegal fishing off the Sunderland coast, resulting in the seizure and removal of 145 crab and lobster pots from the fishery.

Shore enforcement officers maintained a rigorous schedule of sea patrols using NEIFCA's patrol vessel *Bravo 1* throughout the reporting period. Regular patrols along the Yorkshire and Holderness coasts ensured compliance with legislation through observations and boardings. Additionally, officers monitored the Flamborough Head No Take Zone, which included the removal of illegal fishing gear.

Towards the end of the reporting period, officers conducted active patrols along the Holderness coast from Fraisthorpe to Tunstall, where NEIFCA permits five intertidal nets. Early in the season, strong catches of sea bass were reported, and officers worked closely with permit holders to collect biometric data, including scale samples, to support ageing analysis of local stocks.

Shore enforcement officers have maintained full participation in the joint intelligence-gathering programme coordinated by the MMO through the Clue database, reporting relevant information and prioritizing efforts around key targets. This intelligence-led approach has resulted in several successful operations targeting illegal fishing within the NEIFCA district.

Outreach and Joint Working

Shore enforcement officers work alongside a number of organisations and agencies on a regular basis and it is important that links with these groups are maintained. During the reporting period NEIFCA Officers conducted joint patrols with the following organisations:

- The Marine Management Organisation,
- Humberside Marine Police
- The Environment Agency
- Tees Harbour Police
- Northumbria Marine Police
- Gang Master & Labour Abuse Authority
- Centre for Environment, Fisheries, and Aquaculture Science CEFAS
- MCA
- Border Force / Immigration
- Food Crime
- Cleveland Police

Enforcement and Compliance Outputs

During the reporting period, 13 verbal warnings were issued and 2 offences reported to the Chief Officer for further review and consideration. A total of 184 inspections have been undertaken by the shore enforcement team through the reporting period covering the following fishing activities:

- Potting
- Lining
- Shore gathering

- Recreational Angling
- Scallop Dredging
- Netting
- Limited Shellfish Permits
- Unattended inspections
- Trawlers
- Premises Inspections

2.2 Offshore Work streams – Monthly Activity Summary

June

Following the launch of the Authority's main vessel, North Eastern Guardian IV (NEG IV) on 8 May 2025, NEIFCA staff supported Parkol Marine Ltd, in the exhibition of the vessel at the national workboat show held in Southampton between the 9 and 12 June 2025. Although still under the ownership of Parkol Marine Ltd the vessel was well received and attracted a lot of positive national attention. Following return to Whitby, NEG IV was formally named and blessed on 21 June 2025. Throughout June NEG IV underwent a period of commissioning and testing whilst remaining under the ownership of Parkol Marine Ltd and offshore patrol work was supported by the Authority's 6.5m open Rigid Inflatable Boat (RIB), 'Bravo I' and its 9.5m Cabin RIB, 'Protector III'.

July

Commissioning and trials continued onboard NEG IV and 'Bravo I' and 'Protector III' undertook sea patrols throughout the NEIFCA district. During July a number of nomadic scallop dredgers were observed fishing and or transiting the boundaries of the NEIFCA district. At the time some officers were retained on standby to react to any associated illegal activity. On Tuesday 1 July illegally set gear was seized from the Flamborough Head No Take Zone (NTZ). On Wednesday 9 July officers responded to reports of discharging from the Boulby Potash mine, North Yorkshire.

August

Commissioning, works and trials continued onboard NEG IV and 'Bravo I' and 'Protector III' undertook sea patrols throughout the NEIFCA district. During 4 August the first named storm passed through 'Florin' without causing too many problems within the district. On Saturday 9 August 'Bravo I' provided safety boat cover for an annual sea swimming event off Whitby. During August 'Protector III' commenced water temperature monitoring throughout the district.

September

Commissioning, works and trials continued onboard NEG IV and 'Bravo I' and 'Protector III' undertook sea patrols throughout the NEIFCA district.

October

Commissioning, works and trails continued onboard NEG IV and 'Bravo I' and 'Protector III' undertook sea patrols throughout the NEIFCA district. During October 'Protector III' supported a joint patrol with MMO officers to monitor an offshore recreational Tuna fishery, off Whitby, following concerns relating to illegal activity. On 27 October members of the offshore team participated in deck crane training onboard NEG IV. On 30 October 'Protector III' was utilised to support the deployment of the new seawater monitoring probe.

November

Commissioning, works and trails continued onboard NEG IV and 'Bravo I' and 'Protector III' undertook sea patrols throughout the NEIFCA district.

Offshore Enforcement and Compliance Summary

Protector III

Number of Patrols:	22
Inspections:	357
Nautical miles covered:	1960
Boardings:	3

Bravo I

Number of Patrols:	10
Nautical miles covered:	262
Inspections:	112
Boardings:	16

2.3 Environmental/Science Work streams

2.3.1 Consents and Licensing

The NEIFCA district is of great interest to many commercial parties and operators. The list of activities includes, but is not limited to, offshore renewables (wind and tidal), gas cavern development, harbour works, maintenance and capital dredge activities, pipeline and cable corridors/landfall and mine discharge. As a relevant authority, NEIFCA is consulted on all developments within and abounding the district, including the issuing of marine consents or licenses relating to any form of discharge or abstraction.

Applications relating to marine developments can be numerous and each one is considered both independently and cumulatively with any other neighbouring activities. Authority Officers also often play an active role in working groups established for the monitoring and surveillance of developments. The following applications were reviewed between June 2025 and December 2025.

Title	Date reviewed
-------	---------------

Jetty 1A upgrade works River Tees	02/07/2025
Tees and Hartlepool maintenance dredge disposal	02/07/2025
Eastern Green Link	02/07/2025
Humber Gateway Wind Farm Variation to L_2014_00232_4	24/07/2025
Proposed installation of pontoon to facilitate expansion of offshore wind operation and maintenance activities at the Royal Dock, Port of Grimsby	24/07/2025
Jobling Purser - River Wall Repair	25/07/2025
Eskside Wharf Refurbishment Whitby	25/07/2025
The Greatham North East Flood Alleviation Scheme	04/08/2025
Aldbrough Hydrogen Pathfinder - Refurbishment of Brine Discharge Pipe and Diffuser at Aldbrough Gas Storage site in Aldbrough, East Yorkshire	14/08/2025
Middlesborough Port Berths 1-4 Capital dredging	03/09/2025
Maintenance Dredge Disposal - Port of Hull, approaches and riverside berths	10/09/2025
Maintenance Dredge Disposal - Grimsby & Immingham and Sunk Dredged Channel	15/09/2025
Maintenance Dredge Disposal - Port of Goole and approaches	15/09/2025
Maintenance of existing works, King Edward VII Bridge, River Tyne	11/11/2025
South Gare Breakwater Works, River Tees	18/11/2025
Bottlenose dolphin passive acoustic monitoring - Northeast England	19/11/2025

2.3.3 Survey Programme Update

Between June and December 2025, biometric data for 6,003 lobsters and 1,002 edible crabs were collected during 13 observer trips. In addition, 33 quayside sampling visits were completed across the district's three major ports—Bridlington, Scarborough, and Whitby—yielding biometric data for 3,800 lobsters and 2,177 edible crabs.

The annual eelgrass survey, conducted in collaboration with the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust in July 2025, provided valuable insights to inform the Scientific Advisory Group and the current Humber Estuary Byelaw.

From October to December 2025, 13 net surveys were carried out, collecting biometric data and scale samples for ageing analysis of 240 seabass. Bycatch recorded during these surveys included 19 sea trout, two cormorants, and various other fish species.

3.0 National Meetings Update

3.1 *National IFCA Chief Officers Group*

At present the Chief Officer's group meets monthly and is made up of the most senior IFCA Officers in the U.K. Group membership also includes Officers from Fisheries Departments located in the Isle of Man, Jersey and Guernsey.

The group provides an extremely valuable mechanism for the discussion and exchange of information relating to operational and legislative matters affecting 'day to day' activities within IFCA's and NEIFCA currently provides the Secretariat to the group.

Since the last meeting of the Authority NEIFCA was represented at seven meetings held on 4 June, 16 July, 6 August, 8 September, 8 October and the 12 November 2025.

3.2 *National Association of IFCA's Forum & Directors Meetings*

The national Association of IFCA's was formally established on 17 March 2011 following resolution and adoption of draft Articles by majority vote. NEIFCA's interests within the group are represented by the Chair, Vice Chair and Chief Officer.

The national Association is structured as a Company by Limited Guarantee with listed Directors and members and its Articles reflect that structure and governance. This enables the Association to employ its own staff (currently Chief Executive, a full-time support Officer and a fixed term project officer) and conduct its business within a properly structured legal framework. One Director is appointed by each of the member IFCA's currently the Chief Officer and the wider membership of the Association or forum comprises of three representatives from each member IFCA, currently the Chairman and Chief Officer. The board of Directors meet after the forum to consider business and actions resulting from it. The Chief Executive is a Director of the Association as are the elected Chairman and Vice Chairman of the wider members Forum.

Since the last meeting of the Authority NEIFCA was represented at one directors meeting and one forum meeting held on 16 July, 2 September respectively.

Contact Officer: David McCandless
Chief Officer
Tel: 07771936501

NORTH EASTERN INSHORE FISHERIES AND CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

Report to: Authority Meeting
4 December 2025

Science Advisory Group Update

Report by the Environmental & Scientific Manager

A. Purpose of Report

To update members on the most recent proceedings of the Science Advisory Group (SAG) following meetings held on 15 October 2025.

B. Recommendation

That members note the report and consider the Group's recommendations.

1. Background

- 1.1 Since the last Authority meeting held on 24 June 2025, one meeting of the SAG was held on 15 October 2025 and is summarised below.

At the meeting members considered the following items:

- Elect chair
- Beam Trawling Report 2025
- Eelgrass Survey Report 2025
- Intertidal Net Fishery Report 2025
- Any Other Business

Election of chair

All members agreed to re-elect Claire Argent, Natural England Representative, as chair for another year.

Beam Trawling Report 2025

Dr Ralf Bublitz, Environmental & Scientific Manager, presented findings to members regarding the beam trawling activity targeting scallops between April and July 2025. The report highlighted a significant decline in King Scallop landings, which dropped to 31.2 tonnes in 2025 from 77 tonnes in 2024. Additionally, total tow times decreased from 375 hours in 2024 to 217 hours in 2025 and only two of the six permit holders actively fished in this period. Environmental & Scientific Manager Dr. Ralf Bublitz noted that the decline in landings was likely due to reduced fishing activity, as the Landings Per Unit Effort (LPUE) remained steady at approximately 70 kg of scallops per hour per beam. There are

currently no concerns regarding scallop stocks or fishing activity. Fishing effort remains low, and beam trawling is both geographically and seasonally restricted, making it unsuitable as a widely used method. Environmental & Scientific Manager Dr. Ralf Bublitz proposed to keep the current permit system in place with no immediate changes and highlighted that the new beam trawling byelaw, with its flexible permit conditions, allows the Authority to adjust management measures promptly when necessary.

Dr. Ralf Bublitz, Environmental & Scientific Manager, provided an update on scallop dredging permits, noting that a dispensation has been granted to a Whitby fishing vessel for the 2025/26 season. The vessel will use an N-Viro dredge, and NEIFCA officers will be on board to monitor and record both catch and bycatch.

Eelgrass survey Report 2025

Environmental & Scientific Officer Rachel Waite-Hudson presented a report to members on the outcome of the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust's annual Spurn Point eelgrass survey. Eelgrass continues to thrive near the shoreline, accompanied by a newly observed seaward expansion. This development highlights the importance of expanding the protected area to ensure the conservation objectives for eelgrass within this Marine Protected Area are achieved. Environmental & Scientific Officer Rachel Waite-Hudson explained that the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust marked out the extended protected area based on the changes to the byelaw and are currently in the process of putting up new signage in the area to target information for bait diggers.

Intertidal Net Fishery Report 2025

Dr. Ralf Bublitz, Environmental & Scientific Manager, presented an update on the fixed engine fishery. Each year, five intertidal permits are issued for this fishery, valid from 1 October to 30 June. These fixed nets are deployed along the Holderness coast between Fraisthorpe and Tunstall. Under NEIFCA's Fixed Engine Byelaw XVIII, permit holders may set up to three nets with a combined maximum length of 250 metres; however, a voluntary agreement currently restricts each permit holder to a single net. This measure aligns with DEFRA's limitation on commercial shore net fishing, which allows only five intertidal nets within the NEIFCA district.

Since the intertidal net fishery reopened in 2021, landings have varied across key species, with seabass accounting for the majority of the catch (90%), followed by cod (5%), mullet (2%), and sole (1.4%). Over the past four years, seabass landings have averaged around 7 tonnes, except in 2023/24 when they fell to 2.8 tonnes. This decline is likely due to seasonal migration patterns and reduced fishing effort. Notably, Landings Per Unit Effort (kg per tide) reached its highest level in 2024/25, and age-length data indicate consistent growth across all age classes. These trends suggest a healthy and increasing seabass population within the NEIFCA district.

The fishery has faced ongoing challenges from the recreational angling sector, and DEFRA is currently reviewing UK seabass and shore netting fisheries. Historically, NEIFCA officers have struggled to locate and attend set nets promptly. Since the start of the 2025/26 season, the Environmental and Scientific team has strengthened communication with permit holders and introduced a GPS tracker trial on tow nets. These efforts have significantly improved data collection, particularly for catch and bycatch records.

Environmental & Scientific Manager Dr. Ralf Bublitz also highlighted the need to develop NEIFCA's own seabass database, as local stocks have increased in recent years, suggesting potential for a new fishery. The team is recording biometric data and collecting scale samples for ageing. Additionally, a seabass tagging project, in collaboration with CEFAS,

is scheduled to begin in early 2026 to enhance understanding of migration patterns and growth rates

Any other business

Members highlighted the need to diversify the fishing industry, as most fishermen currently depend almost exclusively on lobster, with occasional crab catches. To explore new opportunities, NEIFCA has begun loaning shrimp pots to fishermen to assess the viability of a shrimp fishery. Additional plans include allowing fishermen to close escape gaps between January and March to target velvet crabs. The potential for a squid fishery was also discussed; however, this would require funding for new gear to enable fishermen to participate.

Natural England representatives, Claire Argent and Emma Veryan, emphasized the need for improved monitoring of MPAs within the NEIFCA district. They requested that the next SAG meeting in March include a focused discussion on video tows as part of the review of the 2026 annual survey plan.

Members discussed current issues with iVMS with MMO representative Christian Proud, noting that data is currently supplied by only one provider. Dr. Ralf Bublitz, Environmental & Scientific Manager, raised the possibility of introducing NEIFCA's own tracking system, following the successful implementation of a similar system by Devon & Severn IFCA.

Contact Officer

Dr Ralf Bublitz,
Environmental & Scientific Manager,
Ext. 3694

NORTH EASTERN INSHORE FISHERIES AND CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

Report to: Authority Meeting
4 December 2025

Fisheries Monitoring report 2025

Report by the Environmental & Scientific Manager Dr Ralf Bublitz

A. Purpose of Report

To update members on the most recent outcome of the preliminary stock monitoring analysis for lobster, crabs, beam trawling and fixed nets in 2025.

B. Recommendation

That members note the report.

1. Background

- 1.1 Accurate data collection and stock assessment are essential for maintaining sustainable fisheries. They provide the insights needed to guide fishing practices and management strategies, helping to prevent overfishing, safeguard marine ecosystems, and support local economies and food security. High-quality, reliable data is essential for accurately assessing fish stock status and supporting sound, evidence-based decision-making.
- 1.2 In recent years, the Environmental and Scientific team has focused on enhancing data collection and stock assessment processes. Mandatory catch returns for shellfish, dredging, beam trawling, and intertidal fixed net permit holders capture essential landings and effort data. In 2022, NEIFCA introduced an in-house online catch return system for shellfish permit holders, improving the accuracy and reliability of catch and effort data while providing greater spatial detail on fishing areas. The new catch return system represented a major step forward for NEIFCA and encouraged other IFCA's to adopt similar approaches, as national datasets are insufficient for NEIFCA's stock monitoring needs—particularly for lobster and crab. Additional stock data is gathered seasonally through observer trips aboard fishing vessels, quayside sampling, and NEIFCA-led surveys.
- 1.3 NEIFCA aims to produce and publish annual stock monitoring reports for each fishery following the close of its season. For this meeting, preliminary findings for the lobster and crab fisheries are presented, with the full report scheduled for publication in March 2026 once all 2025 catch returns have been submitted and analysed. Outcomes for beam trawling and intertidal fixed net fisheries are included in the Scientific Advisory Group Update (Item 9). The scallop dredging season concludes on the 30th of April, and its stock monitoring report is published and presented to the Authority at the June meetings.

2 Results

Data on lobster and crab landings and fishing effort were analysed only for the period January to September, as catch returns for October to December were incomplete at the time this report was finalized.

2.1 *European Lobster*

Lobster landings in 2025 have generally followed the trends of the previous two years (Figure 1), with a slight decline noted in July and August. This decrease appears to be linked to a reduction in the number of pots hauled in 2025 (2.1 million) compared to 2024 (2.5 million) and 2023 (2.8 million). Although both landings and the number of pots hauled were lower, the landings per unit effort (LPUE) in 2025 showed an increase compared to previous years (Figure 2).

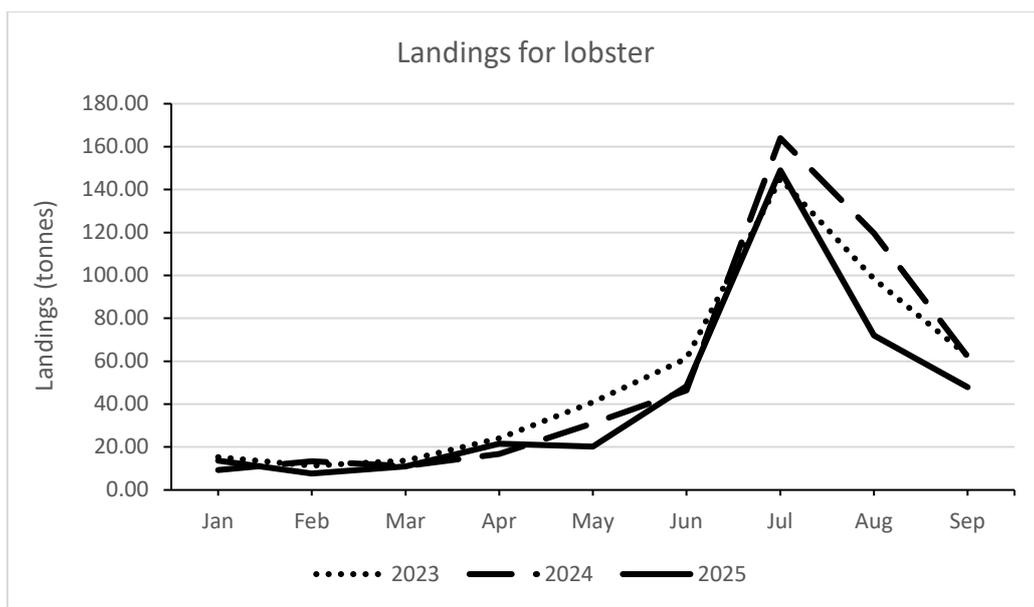


Figure 1: Landings for lobsters recorded between January and September via NEIFCA catch returns for 2023, 2024 and 2025.

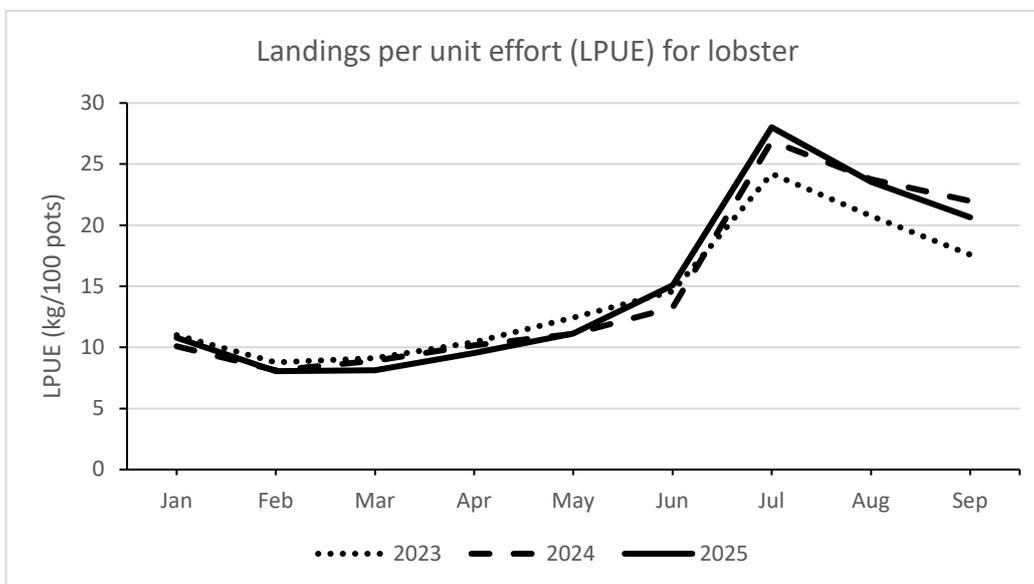


Figure 2: Landings per unit effort (LPUE) in kg of lobsters caught per 100 pots. Effort data derive from NEIFCA catch returns from 2023 to 2025 between the months of January and September.

2.2 Edible Crabs

Edible crab landings have continued to decline over recent years, reaching their lowest levels in 2025 (Figure 3). Between January and September, total landings from NEIFCA permit holders fell from 419 tonnes in 2023 to 272 tonnes in 2025. Similarly, landings per unit effort (LPUE) dropped from 18.5 kg per 100 pots in 2023 to 14.8 kg per 100 pots in 2025 (Figure 4).

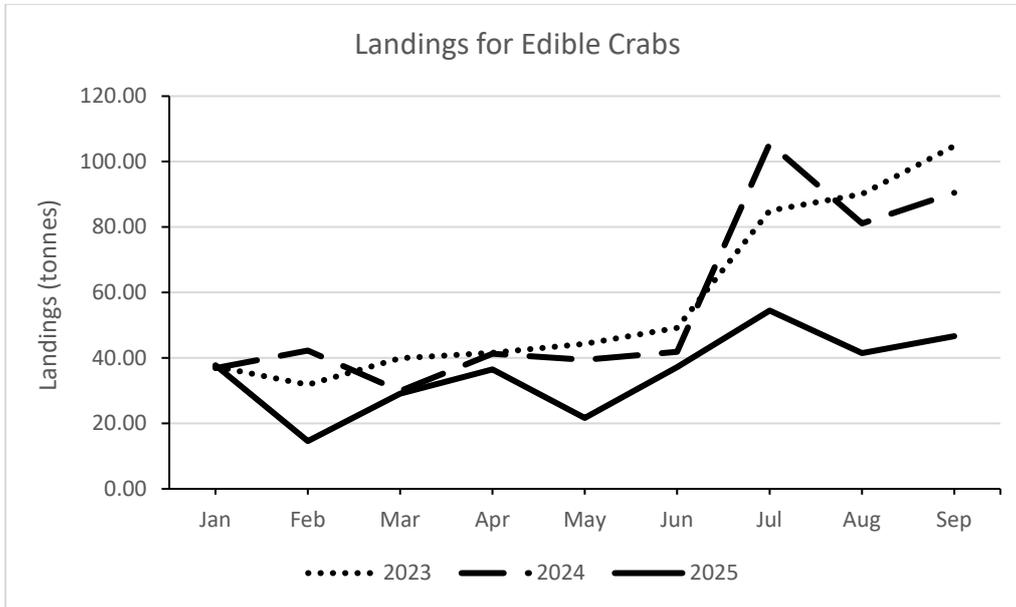


Figure 3: Landings for crabs recorded between January and September via NEIFCA catch returns for 2023, 2024 and 2025.

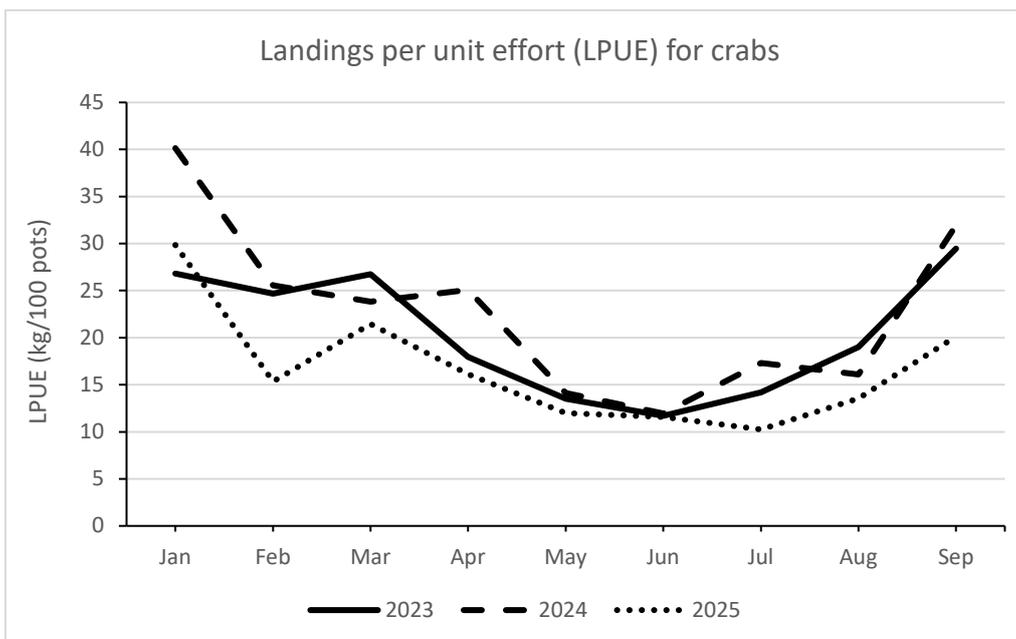


Figure 4: Landings per unit effort (LPUE) in kg of crabs caught per 100 pots. Effort data derived from NEIFCA catch returns from 2023 to 2025 between the months of January and September.

3 Conclusion

Although lobster stocks remain relatively stable, the status of edible crab populations is a growing concern both locally and nationally. Declines have been observed in both inshore and offshore areas, with inshore stocks showing the greatest impact. A recent report by the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) confirms that this trend extends across the UK and Europe.

Edible crabs undertake long-distance migrations, and the availability of inshore stocks is closely tied to seasonal movements between the inshore and offshore habitats. Increased fishing pressure on offshore stocks in recent years has likely contributed to the sharper decline in inshore populations. While NEIFCA already enforces a higher minimum landing size for edible crabs in inshore areas, further protection will require raising the minimum landing size for the offshore fisheries as well.

Modern fisheries face significant challenges, with the effects of climate change already evident in rising sea temperatures and shifts in species distribution—such as the possible declines in some stocks and increases in others like seabass. To address these challenges effectively, management frameworks and regulations must be flexible, enabling timely adaptation of measures as conditions change. The new shellfish byelaw, incorporating flexible permit conditions, provides NEIFCA with the tools to achieve this.

The ageing demographic within inshore fisheries, combined with a shortage of new entrants, presents a significant challenge for the future of small-scale operations (Figure 5). The number of NEIFCA shellfish permits has declined from 215 in 2022 to 188 in 2025, accompanied by a rise in fishing vessels being offered for sale over the past three years. Currently, 45% of permit holders are over the age of 60 and likely to retire in the near future, which could result in the loss of up to half of the local shellfish fishery. To prevent this decline, targeted support is essential—such as funding for apprenticeships and affordable loans for vessel purchases—to attract and retain new entrants in the industry.

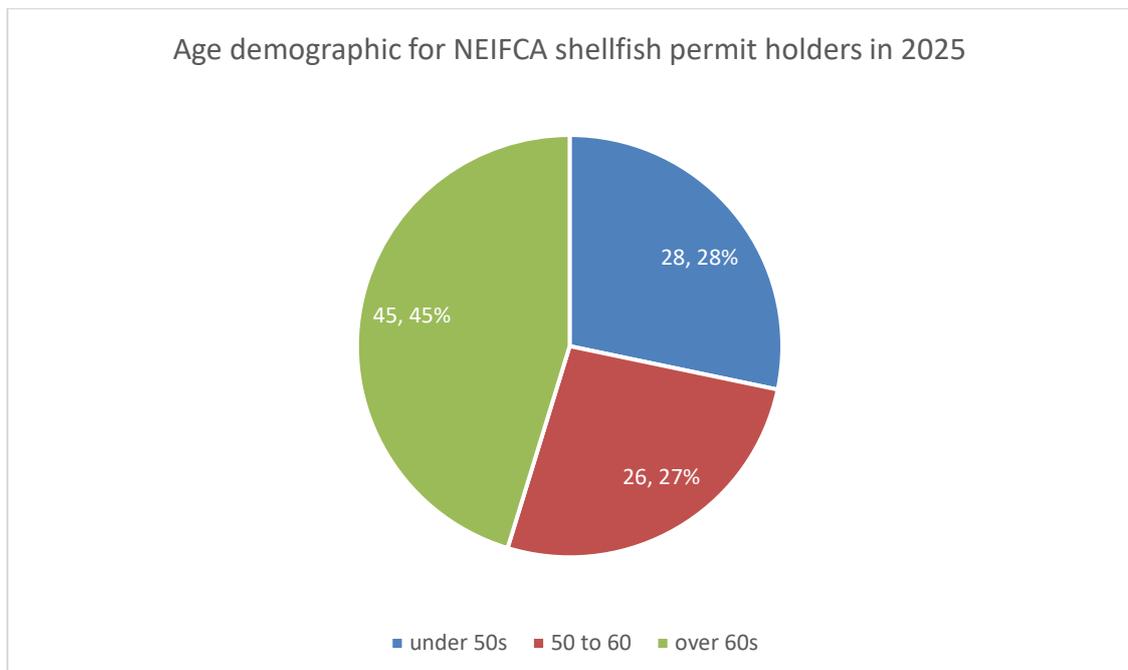


Figure 5: Age demographic for NEIFCA shellfish permit holders for 2025 in percent. Data derived from the NEIFCA permit system.

Contact Officer

Dr Ralf Bublitz,
Environmental & Scientific Manager,
Ext. 3694

NORTH EASTERN INSHORE FISHERIES AND CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

Report to: Authority Meeting
4 December 2025

Fisheries Statutes and Regulations Prosecutions

Report of the Clerk of the Authority.

A. Purpose of Report

To provide information on prosecutions taken by the Authority during the period 1 June 2025 to 30 November 2025.

B. Recommendation

That Members note the report.

1. Background

1.1 Information on prosecutions and sanctions taken on behalf of the Authority are submitted to each meeting of member's information.

1.2 Attached is a schedule of prosecutions and sanctions covering the period since 1 June 2025.

1.3 As an alternative to a prosecution, the Authority can also offer a Financial Administrative Penalty or FAP. The 2011 'Sea Fishing (Penalty Notices) England Order provides the mechanism for the Authority to issue fixed penalties for a range of infringements including breaches of byelaw regulations and national legislation relating to minimum landing sizes. Each offence is categorised to a fixed penalty which can be issued to the skipper and or owner of the respective vessel. The level of penalty issued must exceed the value of the respective catch.

Contact Officer

David McCandless

Chief Officer

Tel: 07771936501

Name(s)	Offence	Sanction	Court	Date	Fined	Costs Awarded	Costs Requested
Mr J Bycroft (Skipper)	Landing 7 egg bearing lobsters - Bridlington	PROS	Scarborough	25 June 2025	£800	£990	£990
Mr C Bycroft (Owner)	Landing 7 egg bearing lobsters - Bridlington	PROS	Scarborough	25 June 2025	£1,600		
Mr K Alexander	Fishing for 5 egg bearing lobsters	PROS	South Tyneside	28 October 2025	£998	£1,325	£1,325
Mr C Thorpe (Skipper)	Landing 6 egg bearing, 3 mutilated and 10 undersize lobsters - Bridlington	PROS	Beverley	18 November 2025	£1153	£255	£255
Mr J White (Owner)	Landing 6 egg bearing, 3 mutilated and 10 undersize lobsters - Bridlington	PROS	Beverley	18 November 2025	£400	£1000	£1000

HOC – Home Office Caution

FAP – Financial Administrative Penalty

PROS – Formal Prosecution in Court

OCD – Conditional Discharge

Costs Requested – This is the amount that the solicitor requests the defendant to pay. This is equal to reasonable costs and does not usually include administrative time etc - so does not represent the full cost to NEIFCA. The solicitor asks for a reasonable amount to stand any chance of getting costs back.

NORTH EASTERN INSHORE FISHERIES AND CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

Report to: Authority Meeting
04 December 2025

Draft NEIFCA Annual Report 2024/2025

Report by the Chief Officer.

A. Purpose of Report

To provide members with a copy of the Annual Report covering the period, 2024/2025, summarising the Authority's outputs and activities during the year.

B. Recommendation

1. That members note the report.

1. Background

1.1 Section 178 of the 2009 Marine and Coastal Access Act places a statutory duty on Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities (IFCA's) to prepare and publish an annual report on their activities.

1.2 The report covering the period 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025 and summarising the Authority's main outputs and achievements during its thirteenth operational year is attached for member's information.

1.3 The report has been submitted to Defra to meet the annual agreed deadline of 30 November.

Contact Officer

David McCandless
Chief Officer
Tel: 07771936501

Background Papers

NEIFCA Annual Report 2024/2025

North Eastern
Inshore Fisheries
and Conservation
Authority

ANNUAL REPORT



2024/2025

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Clerkship:

County Hall
Beverley
East Riding of Yorkshire
HU17 9BA
Telephone: **01482 393515**

Fisheries and Administration:

Town Hall
Bridlington
East Riding of Yorkshire
YO16 4LP
Telephone: **01482 393515**

www.ne-ifca.gov.uk



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.

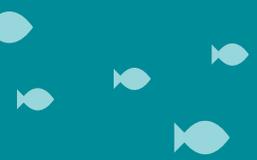
Alongside the build of the new vessel the sale of the old vessel, North Eastern Guardian III (NEG III), was successfully concluded on 7 March 2025 to a maritime services company based in Poland. NEG III was delivered, under its own power, to its new owners in Poland, on 7 March 2025.

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 its 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 IFCA's 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
£1,039,117		£1,502,307	£491,853	£1,010,454	£1,389,120	£-378,666

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
£1,323,062		£202,420	£2,450,463	£2,248,023	£1,389,120	£-858,903

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.

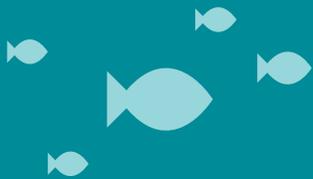
LEGISLATIVE ENFORCEMENT

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.

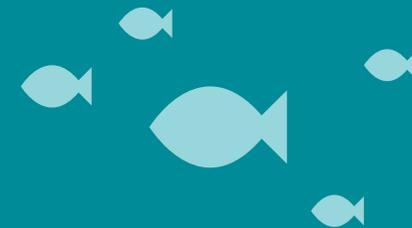
Data Management

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 IFCAs. NEIFCA continues to play an active role in this association through the Chairman and Chief Officer. Throughout 2023/2024 the national Association of IFCAs (AIFCA) played a strong supporting role across the ten 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 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.

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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.

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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.

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.





North Eastern Inshore Fisheries
and Conservation Authority

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