Project Partner - Holderness Fishing Industry Group (HFIG)

- Holderness Fishing Industry Group (HFIG) is a not-for-profit fishers association that has membership from the nearshore, inshore and offshore fishers of the Holderness Coast ranging from Flamborough Head southwards to Spurn Point.
- HFIG supports sustainable fishing efforts across the industry to ensure the prosperity and future of the fishery. As project partners HFIG will operate their fishing industry owned and operated, research vessel R.V. Huntress to gather data from sampling sites along the Holderness coast.
- The Yorkshire Marine Research Centre, HFIG's community laboratory and lobster research centre, will also be involved in the ELSI project by use of their hatchery and laboratory facilities. This to investigate the growth rate of hatchery reared lobsters and analyse samples taken from plankton tows and larval settlement collectors.

What happens next?

The next stage of the ELSI project will involve:

- Testing of equipment.
- Deployment of larval settlement collectors.
- Deployment of plankton tows.
- Setting up the growth study at YMRC with egg-bearing lobsters and their hatchery reared offspring.

Get in touch!

Please contact NEIFCA if you have any questions regarding the ELSI Project and visit our website to find out more!

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North Eastern IFCA

Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority

European Lobster Settlement Index (ELSI) Project

What does the development of a European Lobster Settlement Index mean for the industry?

- Data will need to be gathered over several consecutive years before a larval settlement index may be developed.
- The European Larval Settlement Index will use the data obtained within a model to predict the recruitment of newly settled juvenile lobster into the fishery in 5-8 years' time, once they grow to minimum conservation reference size (87mm).
- The successful trial of this methodology on a European lobster population is the first step towards developing a proactive and new approach to the sustainable management of the lobster fishery.

The 3 key areas of research and data collection within the ELSI project:

- Sampling newly settled juvenile lobster using larval settlement collectors.
- Sampling planktonic lobster larvae using plankton tows.
- Studying the growth rate of lobster within a controlled lab-based environment.

How will this data be used?

- Data on juvenile lobster abundance and density will give an indication of the preferred habitats and environmental conditions for settlement at this stage in their life cycle, as well as testing the feasibility of this method for use on the European lobster population.
- Data from the lab-based studies will provide more information on the growth rates of juvenile lobster from the point where they settle on the seabed to the end of the project, allowing approximate age of wild EBP lobsters that are captured to be assessed.

ELSI Project Summary

- The ELSI project will adapt proven methodology used in the American lobster fishery of Maine, to gather data on the settlement of juvenile European lobster, a first for UK waters.
- This will involve the deployment of larval settlement collectors filled with cobbles to simulate the natural habitat of juvenile lobster; the collectors will be hauled from Spring to Autumn to record the abundance of Early Benthic Phase (EBP) lobster across the sampling locations within the NEIFCA district.