

Hand Gathering Call for Information



Your view is important to us. Northumberland Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority (NIFCA) is inviting you to have your say on how, in your view, hand gathering activities could or should be managed in the NIFCA District.

NIFCA has a duty to manage the exploitation of sea fisheries resources under the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 (MaCCA). This includes the harvesting methods and species detailed below.

Have your say

We would like to speak to as many interested parties as possible about these activities. You can complete online or downloadable questionnaire or if you prefer you can call our office to discuss your concerns. If you would like more information or would like to talk to an officer face-to-face, we can arrange a meeting.

If you would like to speak to one of our officers directly, call our office on 01670 797 676, leave a message and we will get back to you.

Scope of call for information

NIFCA is responsible for the sustainable management of the sea fisheries resources in its district. NIFCA's district can be seen in the map to the right. There are a variety of hand gathering activities that NIFCA hopes to gather more information about through this call for information (see below). This information is needed on these activities to help NIFCA carry out its responsibilities effectively.



Hand Gathering for Periwinkles

What is it?

Periwinkle (*Littorina littorea*) gathering occurs on rocky intertidal areas on the Northumberland coast. The target species are harvested from the shore when it's uncovered by the tide, periwinkles are handpicked and collected into buckets or bags. The activity is carried out at low tide, usually on spring tides as harvestable periwinkle are found in the mid to low intertidal area.

Where does this take place?

Periwinkle gathering occurs throughout the NIFCA district on rocky intertidal areas. 'Hotspot' areas, where activity has been found to be higher, include Berwick, Boulmer, North Blyth and Whitley Bay.

Crab Tiling

What is it?

Crab tiling is the collection of green shore crab (*Carcinus maenas*) in intertidal areas, typically in estuaries. Artificial shelters are placed to attract shore crab to shelter during their moulting process, when they are preferred to be used as angling bait. The shelters used during this process vary regionally, with tyres being the preferred option that is used on the Northumberland Coast. This activity occurs at lower states of tide, when access to the shelters is available.



Where does this take place?

Collection of shore crab occurs in estuaries throughout the district, with tyres observed in the Tyne, Blyth, Wansbeck, Coquet and the Aln estuaries.

Bait Digging

What is it?

Bait digging involves the collection of a variety of species found in intertidal sediments, typically lugworm and ragworm. This can be done by using a fork, spade or in some cases a pump. This process works by turning over the sediment, bringing the worms to the surface, with the resulting collected animals used as angling bait.



Where does this take place?

This activity takes place throughout the district, primarily in the soft sediments found in the intertidal areas of the various estuaries.

Hand Gathering for Mussels



What is it?

Hand gathering of mussels (*Mytilus edulis*) is the process of collection that occurs across a variety of intertidal areas, ranging from rocky shore, to muddier areas. Collection can be for both personal consumption, as well as personal use as angling bait. There is an existing code of conduct relating to mussel collection in the River Blyth which recommends a minimum size of 45mm, as well as different collection strategies to minimise the disturbance to both the marine environment, as well as local bird populations.

Where does this take place?

This practice is widespread throughout the district, although it occurs in high intensities in some areas, namely the river Blyth.

Seaweed Hand Gathering



What is it?

Seaweed collection is the process of the removal of seaweed from intertidal areas, either by hand or through the use of machinery. The collected seaweed can be used in cooking, although is often used for fertiliser in greenhouse and allotment setups.

Where does this take place?

Small-scale collection is known to occur throughout Northumberland, with the actively commonly taking place in the areas around Berwick and North Northumberland.

How you can help?

NIFCA aim to make all decisions on management within our jurisdiction based on evidence in order to ensure any management is justified, proportionate and fair. To do so, NIFCA need information from those engaged in activities and who have knowledge that could enhance the evidence we hold. Good quality information from you can reduce the need for NIFCA to be overly pre-cautionary in its approach to managing this and other fishing activities.

There is potential that voluntary measures will be considered for other areas within the NIFCA District. There is also potential that NIFCA could consider the use of additional control measures implemented through a new Byelaw.

Have your Say

Do you have any information about the hand gathering activities within the NIFCA district?
Key questions for you to consider:

- Do you have information on where the activity takes place and the scale of it?
- Is further regulation needed?
- Where is it needed?
- What is needed?
- Would additional control measures impact you?
- How would others be impacted by potential changes?
- Are voluntary measures effective?
- Should voluntary measures be introduced in other areas?

This call for information is ongoing, as we hope to gather as much information as possible. Please forward this call for information to any contacts you have that may