

Northumberland IFCA Netting Call for Information

Northumberland IFCA would like to invite you to have your say on netting management in the area. Your views are important to us, and the information provided will be considered and could influence management measures in this fishery.

1. Background

The Fixed Engine Byelaw has been in place since all NIFCA byelaws were reviewed and updated in 2015. There are areas where the byelaw could be simplified and updated. In updating the byelaw there are opportunities to include other measures that could be required to manage netting in the district if needed.

1.1 Scope of Consultation: NIFCA District

NIFCA is responsible for the sustainable management of the sea fisheries resources in its district. The district is located off the North East Coast of England and extends from the middle of the River Tyne in the south to the English-Scottish border in the north and out to 6 nautical miles from the coastal baseline including all estuaries up to their 'Normal Tidal Limit' within the landward boundaries of the NIFCA District.

NIFCA do not manage fisheries for migratory fish (salmon or sea trout) which is managed by the Environment Agency, therefore this byelaw and any future versions of it, will not include measures for these species.

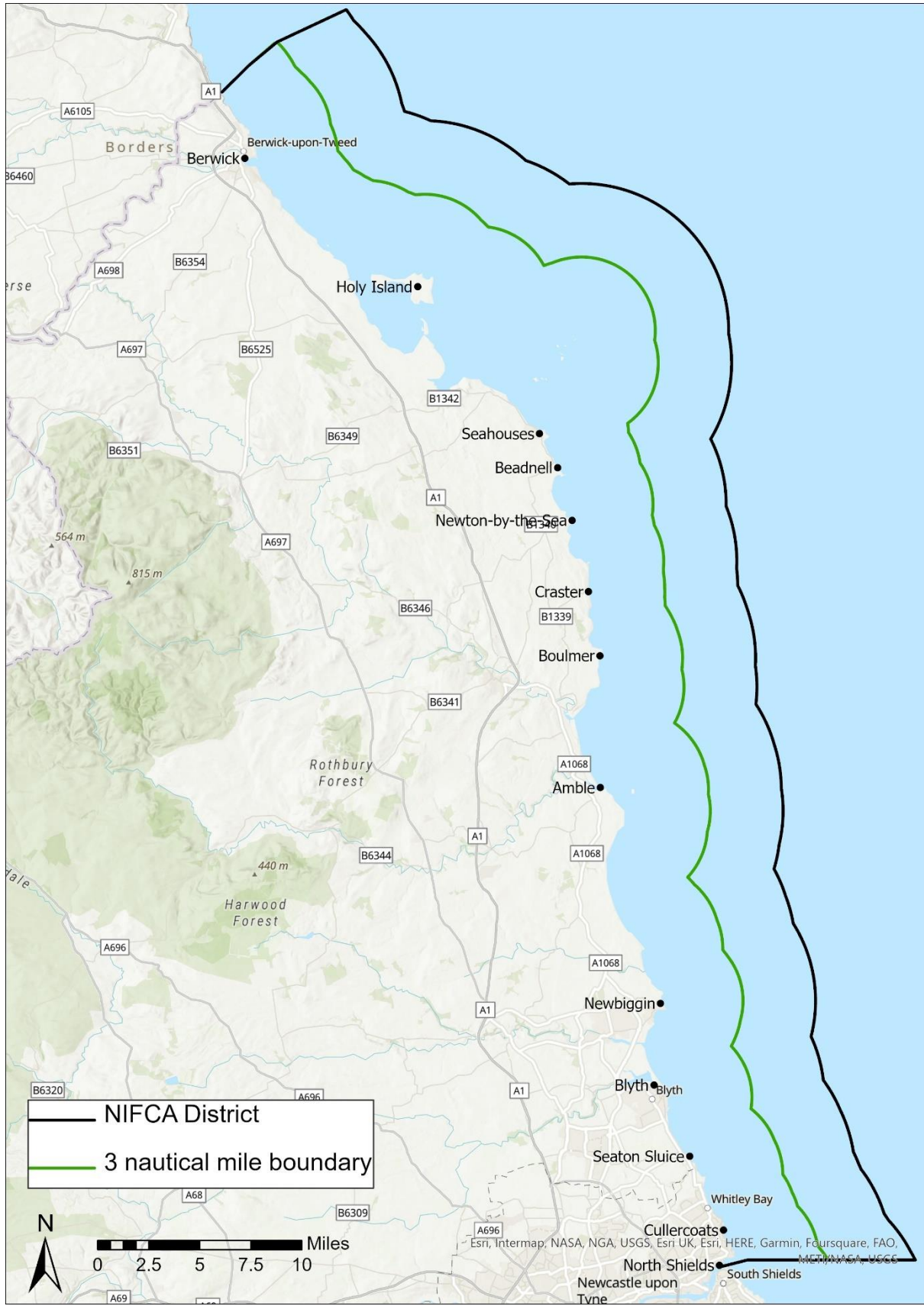


Figure 1 The NIFCA district showing the location of the 3 nautical mile and 6 nautical mile limits.

1.2 Fisheries

1.2.1 Netting Fishery

Current levels of fixed engine netting are low from both commercial and recreational fishers within the district. Activity within this sector has gradually reduced along with whitefish stocks locally since the mid-90s to its current levels, currently there are a small number of vessels that set nets alongside other fishing methods. Nets mainly target cod, pollock and saithe and some flatfish.

There is some licenced fixed sea trout netting in the district, the season runs from 26th of March to 31st May, this fishery is managed by the Environment Agency and so the management of this fishery is not in the remit of this byelaw review.

1.2.2 The current byelaw

The information below sets out the details of the current Fixed Engine Byelaw and includes charts of the areas and zones as written in the byelaw. The headings relate to the paragraph headings as they are written in the byelaw. The existing byelaw can be found on the NIFCA website: <https://nifca.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/FULL-BYELAWS-February-2022.pdf>

Paragraph 2

A person must not use a fixed engine to fish or take sea fish within that part of the District that lies within the River Tweed

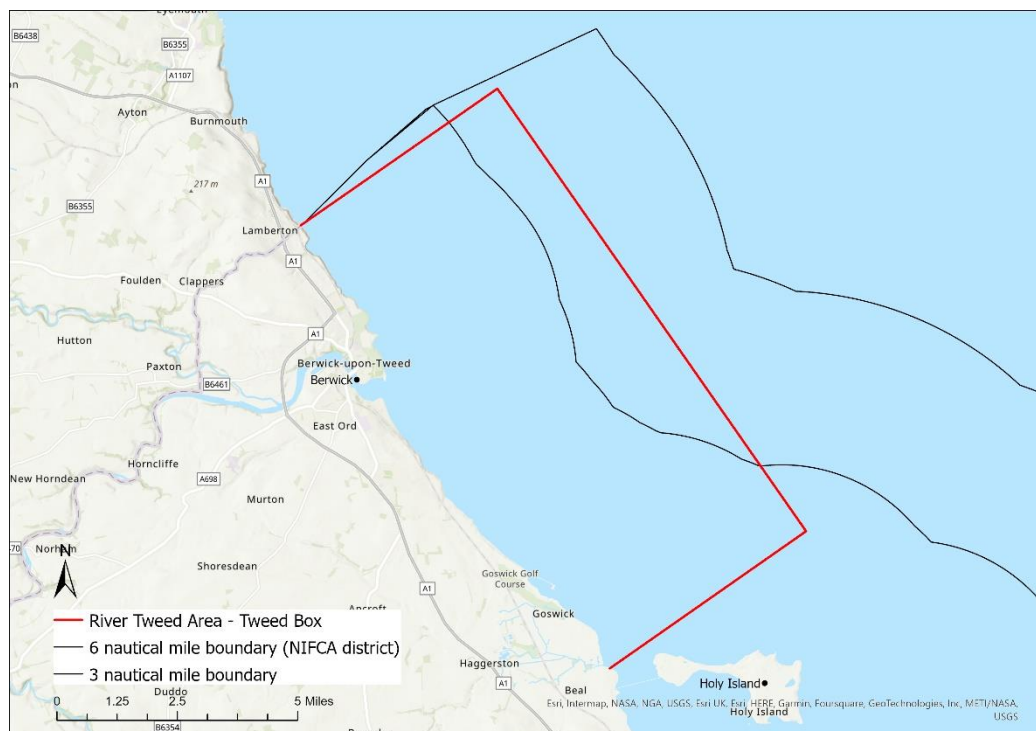


Figure 2 The River Tweed area (red)

Paragraph 3

A person must not use a fixed engine to fish or take sea fish at any time during the period 26th March to 31st October inclusive within:

- (a) The Area of the district west of an imaginary line drawn between the seaward end of the south pier at South Shields and Marsden Point.
- (b) The area of the District west of an imaginary line drawn from Hauxley Point and Coquet

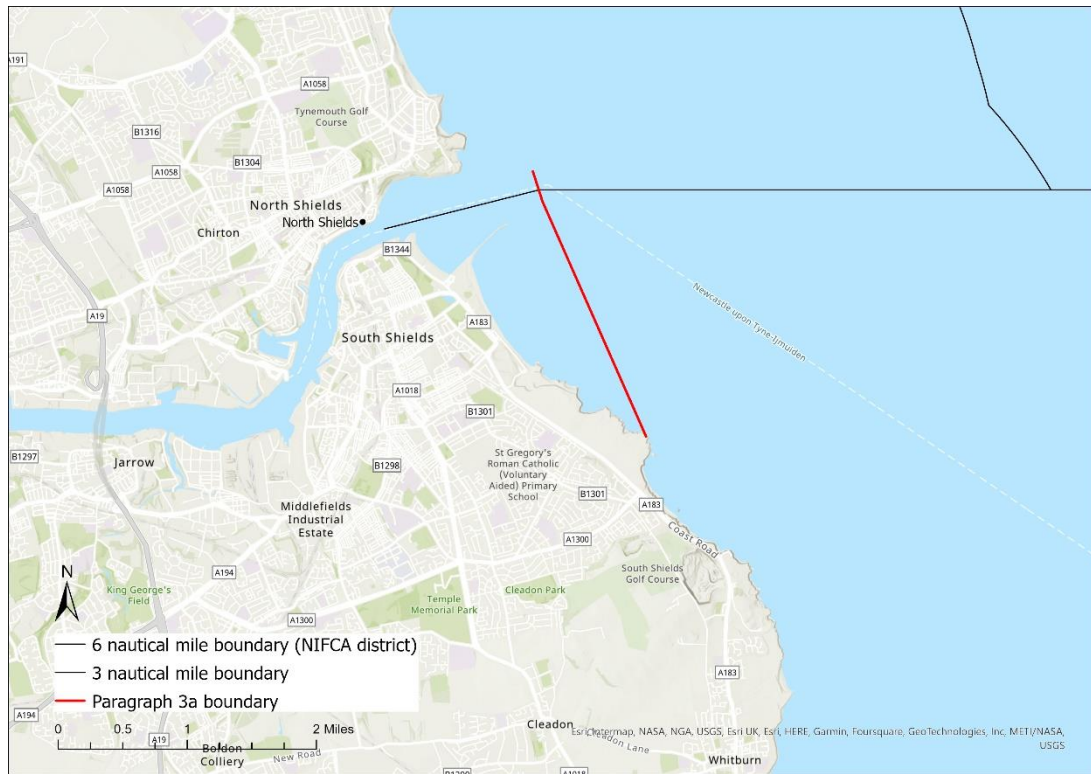


Figure 3 NIFCA Byelaw Paragraph 3a

Island Light House, thence on a bearing 355° to a point 3 nautical miles and 622 metres distant and thence due north-west to Seaton.

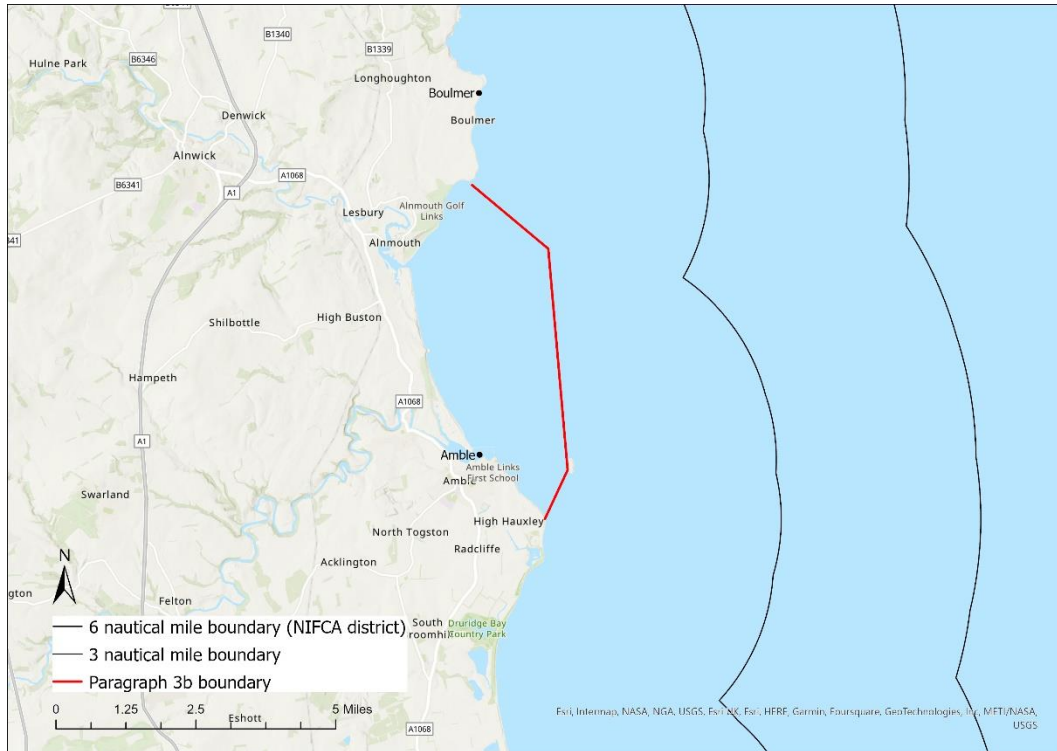


Figure 4 NIFCA Byelaw Paragraph 3b

Paragraph 4

A person must not use a fixed engine to fish or take sea fish at any time during the period 26th March to 31st October inclusive:

- (a) In waters that are less than 7 metres in depth, unless those waters are separated from the shore by waters deeper than 7 metres at any state of the tide.
- (b) Where the headline of the fixed engine is less than 4 metres below the surface of the water at any state of the tide.

Paragraph 5

A person must not use a fixed engine to fish or take sea fish at any time during the period 1st November to 25th March inclusive in the restricted areas, where the headline of the fixed engine is less than 4 metre below the surface of the water at any state of the tide.

Wansbeck Conservation Area (restricted area)

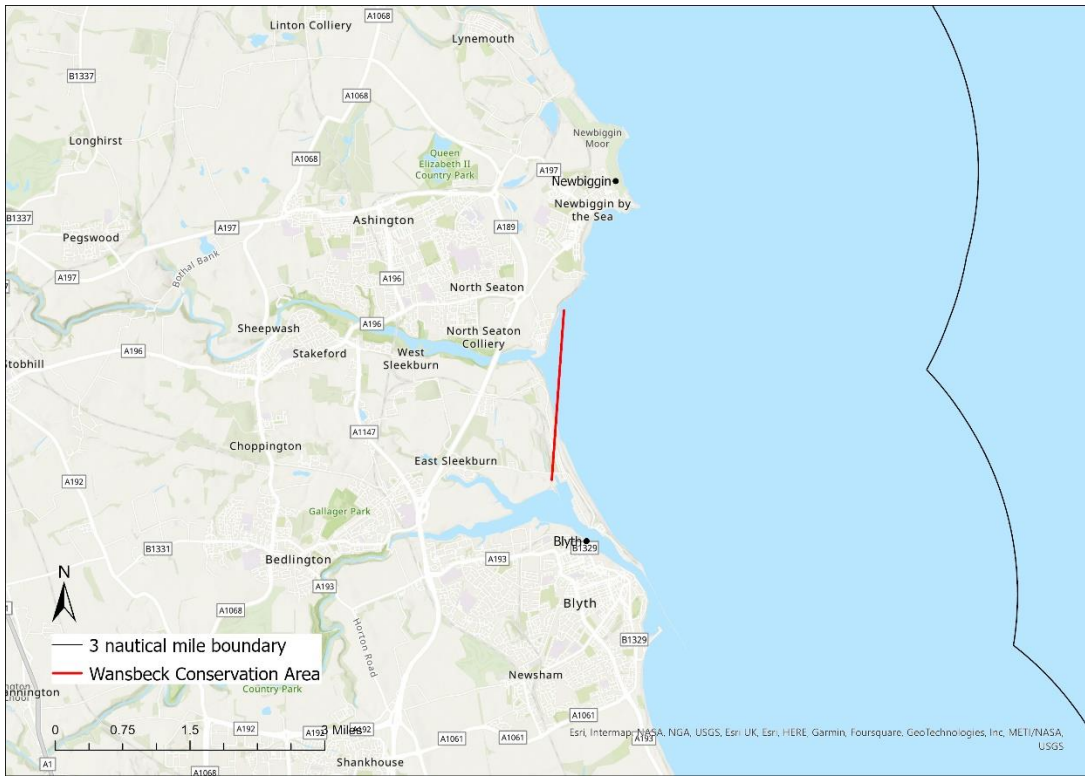


Figure 5 NIFCA Byelaw Wansbeck Conservation Area

Coquet Conservation Area (restricted area)

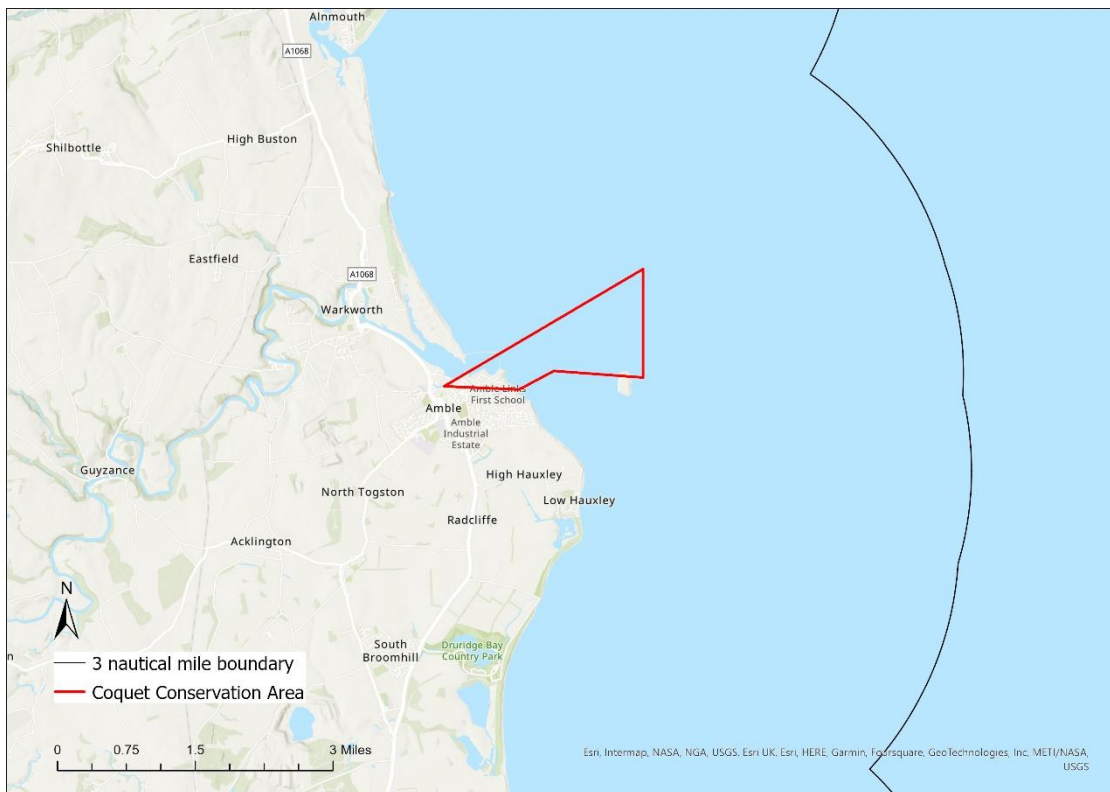


Figure 6 NIFCA Byelaw Coquet Conservation Area

Tyne Conservation Area (restricted area)

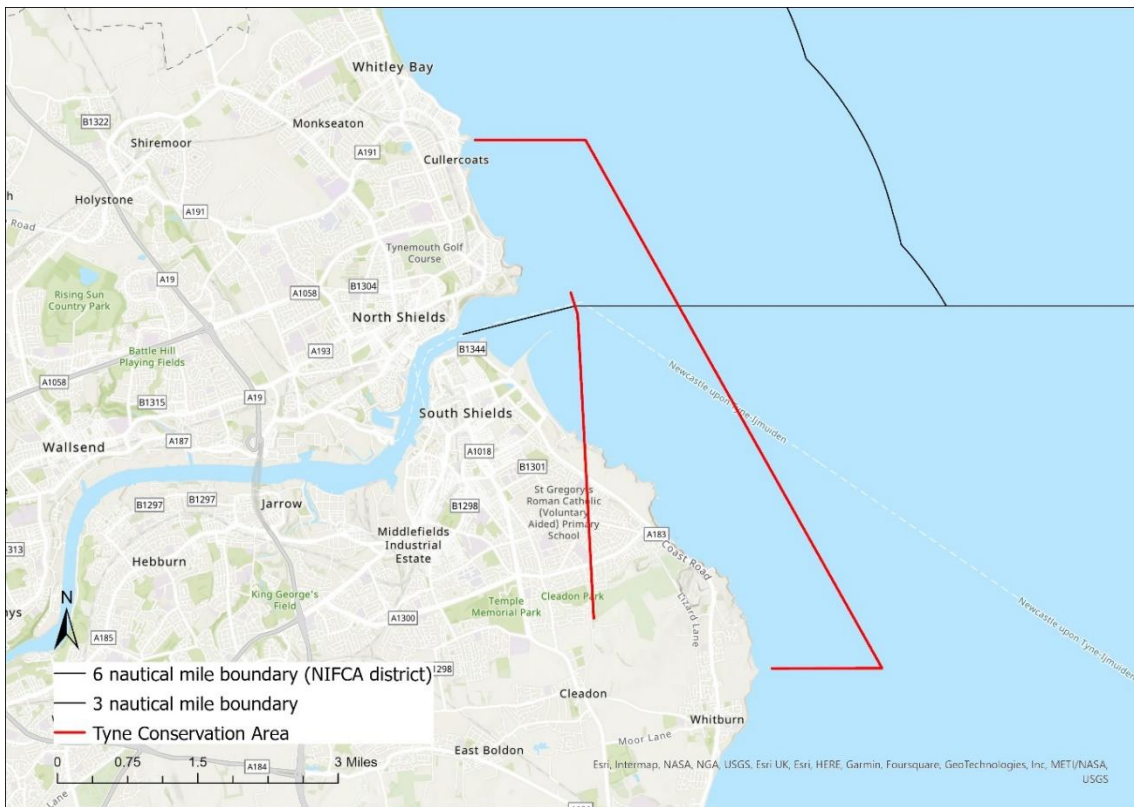


Figure 7 NIFCA Byelaw Tyne Conservation Area

Paragraph 6

Paragraph 3 to 5 do not apply to the use of “T” nets or “J” nets which have been authorised by the Environment Agency

Paragraph 7

Paragraph 2 to 5 do not apply to the use of pots to fish or take sea fish.

1.3 Summary

The Fixed Engine byelaw is currently being review by NIFCA. This review is in the early stages, and NIFCA would like input from fishers to help develop this review.

2. The Call for Information

NIFCA would like you views on whether to modify the above byelaw. We would like to speak to as many interested parties as possible about the development of this byelaw. NIFCA are also interested in your views on other types of netting as well as fixed engines (this does not include 'T' or 'J' netting for sea trout which is managed by the Environment Agency). We would like your opinion on:

1. Current management measures
2. Suggestions for future measures

You can complete online or downloadable questionnaire (links below), 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 or online (Microsoft Teams/Zoom), we can arrange a meeting.

To respond to the consultation, you have a few options to choose from:

1. You can respond online at: <https://nifca.gov.uk/about-us/consultations/>
2. You can respond by post to our office in Blyth by downloading the form at: <https://nifca.gov.uk/about-us/consultations/> or call to request us to send it out in the post on 01670 797 676.
3. If you would like to speak to one of our officers directly, call our office on 01670 797 676 to give your feedback or to arrange a date for you to meet with an Officer.

The deadline for all responses is 2nd December 2022.

We look forward to hearing your views.