

Coquet Island



Inshore Fisheries and
Conservation Authority

Annual Plan

2024-2025

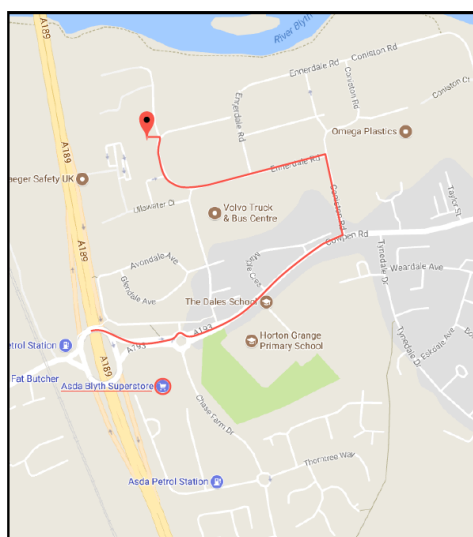
Northumberland Inshore Fisheries & Conservation Authority (NIFCA)

"Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities will 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."

Map of Northumberland IFCA District



Finding the NIFCA Office, 8 Ennerdale Road, Blyth



Directions:

- Exit the A189 into Blyth,
- Go straight across the roundabout next to ASDA,
- Continue on Cowpen Road and turn left at the main set of traffic lights onto Coniston Road,
- Take the next left onto Ennerdale Road,
- Continue on Ennerdale Road, past Volvo on your left and follow the road round to the right,
- NIFCA is the white building on the left through the green metal gates.

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1. Introduction



Chief Officer Mark Southerton (left) with Chair Les Weller (right)

On behalf of Chair Les Weller and Chief Officer Mark Southerton, we would like to welcome you to the Annual Plan for 2024-25 for Northumberland IFCA.

Under Section (177) of the Marine and Coastal Act 2009 Northumberland IFCA is required to make and publish a plan setting out the Authority's main objectives and priorities for the year ahead.

This will be the fourteenth year since inception of the Authority under the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009. Change is inevitable and there's been a number of notable changes in the last few years for NIFCA with senior management and staff through to officers and the membership, but with change brings new opportunities and ideas. Northumberland IFCA is in a strong position with a balanced and active membership and an enthusiastic team of staff committed to continually adapting and building on its previous successes.

This year we will see further change with the retirement of our longstanding general member and Chairman Les Weller. Les

has been with the Authority from inception having joined the Sea Fisheries Committee (SFC) in 2009. I would like to personally thank Les for his dedication, enthusiasm and commitment to public service ensuring Northumberland IFCA is well represented with an active membership. Les also hails from the recreational sea angling (RSA) sector and has worked tirelessly over the years to ensure the sector is rightly considered and recognised in the day-to-day operations and policy development, both locally and nationally while appointed as the Vice Chair of the Association of Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities (AIFCAs), a position he has held over the last 4 years. On behalf of the staff at NIFCA who he has supported over his tenure, we wish Les a long and happy retirement to enjoy his passions outside of the IFCA family.

We are also looking ahead with enthusiasm to the changes and challenges in this new chapter in the year ahead as we continue to fulfil the Authority remit as referred to in the IFCA vision (Page 5 of this Plan). NIFCA will continue to maintain the best possible standards of work, including in relation to the health and safety of our work force and stakeholders in conducting the operations of the Authority.

The year ahead is likely to see major developments in connection with the NIFCA remit arising from the development and implementation of Fisheries Management Plans, the first of such plans being published at the end of 2023. The Joint Fisheries Statement (JFS) sets out the policies for achieving the eight fisheries objectives in the Fisheries Act 2020. It will ensure a thriving, sustainable fishing industry and healthy marine environment. It has been developed and adopted for the purposes of Section 2 of the Fisheries Act 2020. The JFS enables the UK fisheries policy authorities (Defra, and the devolved administrations in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales) to develop 43 Fisheries Management Plans (FMPs) to help deliver sustainable fisheries.

The first five FMPs which include Crab and Lobster, King Scallop, Bass, Whelk, Southern North Sea flatfish and Channel non quota species have already been published with the North Sea Flatfish expected later in the year. NIFCA will be following this policy work closely as we move to implementation.

Highly Protected Marine Areas (HPMA) remain a Defra policy area. East of Farnes HPMA, an area approximately 50km off the Northumberland coast, was designated as an HPMA, although well beyond the sphere of NIFCA influence and management responsibility. HPMA's will be highly significant for any IFCA's which do have one in their district. We will maintain a watching brief on any further development of this policy area.

We will continue to work with Defra and the Association of IFCA's on the introduction and recording of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and metrics into the reporting of the work of NIFCA, to demonstrate and publicise our considerable value on inshore fisheries management which covers a wide range of delivery areas including enforcement, Marine Protected Areas, Marine Licenses and consents and engaging with the National Fishery Management Plans.

We will continue to work closely with partner agencies including the Marine Management Organisation (MMO), Environment Agency, Natural England, Newcastle University and our constituent Councils. We pride ourselves greatly upon the success and strength of these relationships which are to the benefit of delivery of the IFCA remit and to our partners and stakeholders, particularly the people of Northumberland and North Tyneside.

2024-25 will also see some changes in the NIFCA Membership. Members remain integral to the functioning of IFCA's, especially in the making of policy and supporting Authority governance. Regarding general membership, we begin with two outgoing members, Jim Stephenson, a retired commercial fisher, following 28 years of loyal service as an MMO general member and SFC member before that, we thank Jim for his public service and contributions to this Authority. And as mentioned above, our outgoing Chairman. We will be working closely with the MMO to ensure we have the best probability of attracting a new member following the national recruitment campaign and again bring balance back to the membership as well as reviewing any general members from the previous merit list.

It is with the utmost appreciation that we extend our thanks to our General Members who volunteer their time, experience and expertise freely to support the work of the Authority. Without their skills, dedication, and continued contributions to NIFCA at meetings and beyond, our vision to manage a sustainable marine environment with "balance" would not be achievable.

Regarding our Councillor Members, North Tyneside Council had local elections in May 2023, a process which will be undertaken by our one Council Member from the region. The bulk of our present Councillor Members reside in Northumberland County Council, and have local elections in May 2024. We are also in a General Election year and must be prepared for any change to our respective councils. We also extend our thanks to all our Councillor Members for their excellent attendance and contributions at meetings; their support of the work of NIFCA and the time given to the Authority amongst their many other commitments as Local Authority Councillors, is vital to our ongoing success.



The Environmental Team at Blyth Estuary

The Chief Officer is supported with a wider senior management team consisting of Emma Cosimini (Administration Officer), Alex Aitken (Lead Environmental Officer), Nick Weir (Lead Enforcement Officer) and Julian Sutton (Finance Officer).

The work of administration to support all the work of the Authority remit is led by Emma Cosimini and supported by a further two part time posts Debbie Carr and Debra Scott.

We are pleased that the Authority retains an extremely strong team of Environmental Officers led by our Lead Environmental IFCO Alex Aitken, comprising Senior Environmental IFCO Andrew Boon and Environmental IFCOs Katy Smart and Vicky Rae who joined the Authority in September 2023 under a two year Defra funded post. NIFCA is currently recruiting an additional 2-year fixed term appointment for a dual role in Environment and Enforcement support this year. They each bring a high level of knowledge and expertise to the work of NIFCA, which is vital in advising the Authority in the development and implementation of our policies. Alex Aitken provides excellent leadership and the outputs from her and the team are to a very high standard, and appreciated by both colleagues and members alike. It is also worth noting that currently three of our Environmental team are also warranted and able to support that team when required.

In the field of enforcement, our Officers, led by Lead Enforcement IFCO Nick Weir, supported by full time posts Emily O'Regan, Toby Nash, skipper/engineer Wayne Mitchel and two part time posts Ricky Willis and Mark Lynn will continue their high-quality work. The team produces excellent levels of intelligence, which is integral to enabling the Authority (as well as assisting the MMO) to foresee and deal with potentially difficult situations relating to compliance, using the essential framework of byelaws and other regulations which governs the inshore fishery in the NIFCA district. We are grateful to the Officers for the knowledge and dedication they bring to their tasks and to their engagement with fishers in the district, both commercial and recreational. Their Officer role can often be one of education and explanation, which is always undertaken professionally and

recognising that 'prevention is better than cure'. If necessary, however, the Authority will take all appropriate action from the range of sanctions which can be utilised, and ultimately with the benefit of excellent legal advice and representation in court in serious cases of transgression of our byelaws and regulations by Andrew Oliver, solicitor who has represented NIFCA in such cases for a number of years.

In the year ahead, we will continue to provide increased focus to the existentially important subject of climate change and how this may affect inshore fisheries in the Authority district, most notably over this last winter with some unusually prolonged winter storms. We will also seek to recognise and minimise the carbon footprint of NIFCA as much as possible, through NIFCA's own Climate Change Policy and help contribute to the UK net zero target of 2050.

There is so much to be positive about in the year ahead and we hope this is reflected in the Annual Plan. In addition, we would like to highlight the "Jon Green Award of Excellence" which both commemorates our former colleague, who is sadly missed and also gives recognition for outstanding service, and which we are very pleased to record was received by Mark Lynn, in succession to Alex Aitken. Mark is an excellent Enforcement Officer and the award reflects recognition for his efforts in mentoring Toby and Emily during their first year with the Authority, accelerating their understanding of the fisheries and building their confidence as enforcement officers and the use of their powers with regular debriefing sessions following patrols, allowing both officers to reflect and self-evaluate their understanding of the interactions they had during the day.

Best wishes to everyone reading this report which we hope you find both interesting and enjoyable and we do hope that it will be possible to meet you in the year ahead.



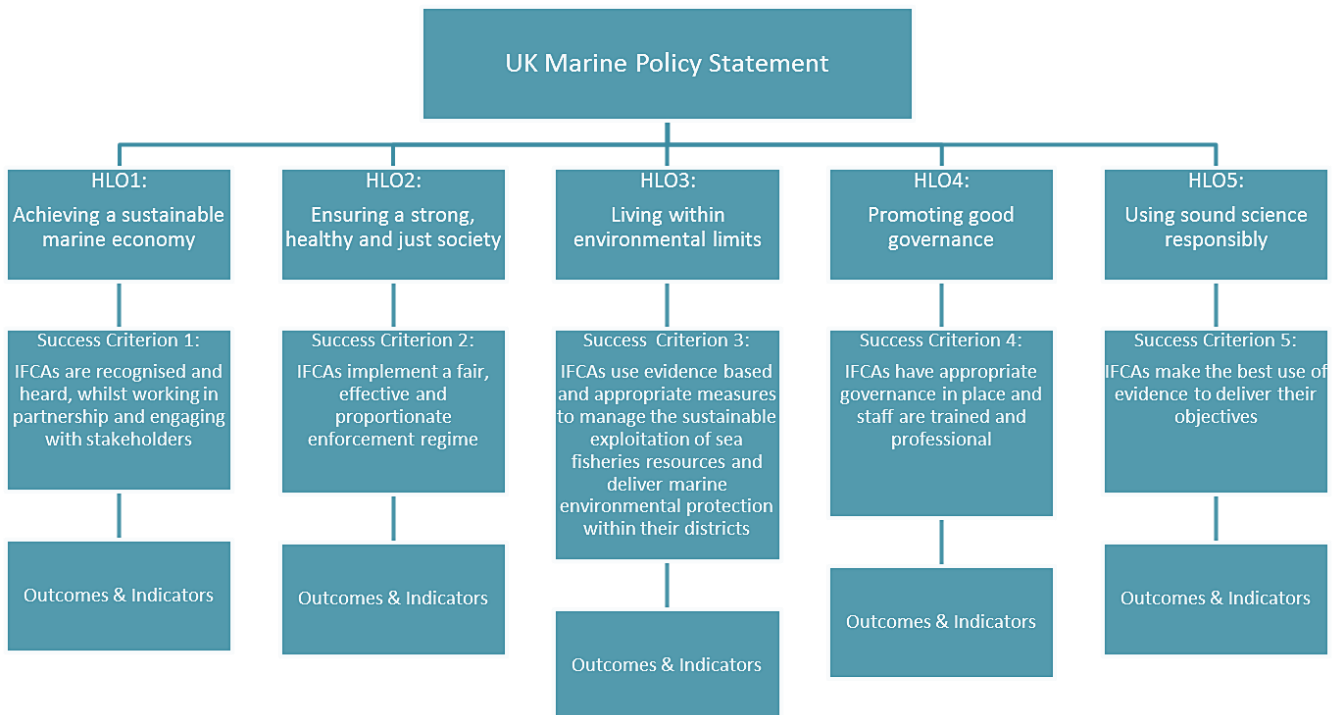
Chief IFCO Mark Southerton (left) and Chair Les Weller (centre) presenting "Jon Green Award of Excellence" to IFCO Mark Lynn (right)

2. IFCA Vision and Success Criteria

Vision:

“Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities will 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.”

Revised IFCA Performance Framework and Metrics:



IFCA Success Criteria:

Success Criterion 1:

IFCAs are recognised and heard, balancing the economic needs of the fishery whilst working in partnership and engaging with stakeholders.

Definition:

IFCAs will be a visible, respected and trusted regulator within coastal communities and will maintain and deliver a strategy to communicate their vision and duties effectively. IFCAs will engage with policy makers, industry, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), recreational and commercial users; and other regulators. They will work jointly and collaboratively with partner organisations across boundaries; will participate and contribute to the development and implementation of regional and national marine policy, including the marine planning regime; will take long-term strategic decisions and manage risks effectively. IFCAs may maintain a national body to co-ordinate the activities of authorities that are party to arrangements.

Outcomes

- The IFCA will maintain and implement an effective communication strategy.
- 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 contribute to coordinated activity at a national level.
- The IFCA and its principal partners will have a clear understanding of roles and responsibilities. Memoranda of Understanding with MMO, Natural England, Environment Agency and Cefas will be maintained. Opportunities for greater efficiencies, effective joint working and collaboration will be explored and implemented when feasible.

Indicators

- **SC1A:** The IFCA will maintain a database of stakeholder contacts that will have been reviewed and updated by 31 March each year.
- **SC1B:** The IFCA will have completed a review of its Communication Strategy and Implementation Plan by 31 March each year.
- **SC1C:** The IFCA will have reviewed its website by the last working day of each month.
- **SC1D:** The IFCA will have reviewed its website and ensured it meets the objectives of its communication strategy, by 31 March each year.
- **SC1E:** The IFCA will have reviewed all of its Memoranda of Understanding by 31 March each year. There will be a clear plan in place to update MoUs where necessary, to an agreed timescale.
- **SC1F:** 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 in the Annual Plan.

Success Criterion 2:

IFCAs implement a fair, effective and proportionate enforcement regime.

Definition:

The IFCA enforcement regime is risk-based, makes appropriate use of intelligence, meets legislative standards and complies with the Regulators Code. It should make effective use of the resources available to regulators; complement and align, if possible, with the regimes in adjacent IFC Districts and management by other organisations including the MMO and Environment Agency. Consistency and fairness are important. Regulatory compliance is promoted. Enforcement action is carried out by trained, professional officers working to clear standards of conduct.

Outcomes

- The IFCA will publish its Enforcement Risk Register and Strategy, clearly setting out its approach to achieving regulatory compliance and potential sanctions that may be applied for infringements and/or offences.
- The IFCA will have developed consistency in regulations (byelaws) with other organisations.
- The IFCA will manage operational activity (e.g. through a Tasking & Coordination Group) and capture, record, evaluate and disseminate intelligence that is compatible with partner organisations. It is engaged in joint working with partner organisations.
- 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.

Indicators

- **SC2A:** The IFCA will ensure its Enforcement Risk Register and Strategy are published and available on its website from 1 April each year.
- **SC2B:** The IFCA will demonstrate in its Annual Report how it has worked with other regulators to achieve consistent quality, application and enforcement of management measures.
- **SC2C:** The IFCA will compile records of enforcement activity in a standard format; provide them to the National Inshore Marine Enforcement Group (NIMEG) and publish them on its website.
- **SC2D:** The IFCA will adopt the national Code of Conduct for IFCOs, which will be reviewed annually and published on its website by 1 April.
- **SC2E:** The Code of Conduct for IFCOs is reflected in work objectives and annual appraisals for all Warranted Officers.
- **SC2F:** Warranted Officers attain accreditation. All undertake Continuing Professional Development.

Success Criterion 3:

IFCAs use evidence based and appropriate measures to manage the sustainable exploitation of sea fisheries resources and deliver marine environmental protection within their districts.

Definition:

The IFCAs were created as statutory inshore regulators by the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009. They are relevant authorities for implementing international environmental commitments including the Birds, Habitats, Water and Marine Strategy Framework Directives and make an important contribution to securing a network of well managed marine protected areas. Fisheries Management Plans identify local management measures which should be based on evidence; be timely; subject to appropriate consultation and in step with national initiatives and priorities. An IFCA should balance the social and economic benefits of exploiting sea fisheries resources with the need to protect the environment. It should make a contribution to sustainable development.

Outcomes

- The IFCA will identify issues likely to affect sustainable management of the marine environment in the IFC District; undertake risk assessment and gap analysis; review appropriateness of existing measures; evaluate management options and develop and implement proportionate marine management solutions.
- The IFCA will support 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 Marine Protected Areas; and that local management contributes to delivery of targets for the Marine Strategy Framework Directive, Water Framework Directive and Marine Plans.
- 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.

Indicators

- **SC3A:** The IFCA will record site-specific management considerations for Marine Protected Areas and report progress to the Authority.
- **SC3B:** The IFCA will publish data analysis and evidence supporting new management measures, on its website.
- **SC3C:** 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.
- **SC3D:** The IFCA will have developed a range of criteria-based management options that are explained to stakeholders through the IFCA website and reviewed by 31 March each year.
- **SC3E:** New IFCA management measures selected for development and implementation are delivered within agreed timescales.
- **SC3F:** 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.
- **SC3G:** Progress made in relevant Fisheries Management Plan areas, including Maximum Sustainable Yield commitments, will be noted in the IFCA's Annual Report.

Success Criterion 4:

IFCAs have appropriate governance in place and staff are trained and professional.

Definition:

IFCAs are statutory authorities and sit within the local government family. Authority members may be either general members or local councillors. They comply with Codes of Conduct and the Standing Orders that apply to meetings of local government committees. General members are appointed on merit, through open competition and for a term. They are subject to an annual performance appraisal.

An IFCA is funded by levy, charged to its member councils. Funding originates in local taxation. An IFCA is accountable for its use of public resources and should ensure that a proper auditing regime provides confidence in its commitment and spend of public money. It should make effective use of its resources, including staff and assets. An IFCA has a statutory obligation to prepare and publish Annual Plans and Annual Reports.

Outcomes

- 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.
- The IFCA Committee will be supported by an organised, efficient and effective secretariat. New members will receive an induction pack and briefing from the Authority. There will be a rolling twelve month schedule of quarterly Authority meetings. Notices of meetings and documentation will be made available in line with Standing Orders.
- IFCA Committee meetings will be held in public unless material is either confidential, or exempt within the meaning of the Local Government Act 1972.

Indicators

- **SC4A:** 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.
- **SC4B:** 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.
- **SC4C:** IFCA staff will have annual performance management plans in place. Annual appraisals for all staff will have been completed by 31 March each year.
- **SC4D:** An efficient secretariat of IFCA staff support IFCA Authority meetings which are held quarterly and are quorate. Meeting documentation will meet Standing Orders.
- **SC4E:** The IFCA will have demonstrated, in its Annual Report, how marine, land and water management mechanisms in the Inshore Fisheries & Conservation District have worked responsively and effectively together.

Success Criterion 5:

IFCAs make the best use of evidence to deliver their objectives.

Definition:

IFCAs are statutory regulators for their Inshore Fisheries and Conservation District. Decision-making should be based on evidence. All IFCAs are supported by officers who pool their expertise and share best practice as a Technical Advisory Group (TAG). A programme of research activity and monitoring is planned, developed and updated in consultation with partners. The programme informs management decisions and supports justification for additional research and evidence gathering.

Outcomes

- A strategic research plan that contributes to greater understanding of the marine environment and delivery of cost-effective management of sea fisheries resources.
- Standard Operating Procedures describe how data is captured and shared with principal partners.
- A list of research databases held by the IFCA and the frequency of their review.
- Non-confidential meta-data collected through the IFCA research programme should be recorded in a database available to the marine research community

Indicators

SC5A: The IFCA will demonstrate progress that has been made towards identifying its evidence needs by publishing a research plan each year.
SC5B: The IFCA will publish a research report annually that demonstrates how evidence has supported decision making.
SC5C: The IFCA's contribution to TAG and progress that has been made towards a national evidence needs programme will be recorded in the IFCA's Annual Report.



3. Local Targets and Priorities in 2024–2025

1. To ensure the continued successful performance of NIFCA, delivering all its duties and fulfilling the IFCA vision and success criteria.
2. To maintain an effective management and enforcement regime in the district to ensure a sustainable fishery and marine environment on an ongoing basis. This will take account of and guidance from the NIFCA Compliance and Enforcement Strategy, which can be found on the Authority website. (Success Criteria 2 & 3)
3. To refer to the Authority Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of fisheries in the district to improve the sustainability performance of the NIFCA management regime. This is kept under review on a continuous basis, with a formal review every two years. (Success Criteria 3)
4. To develop and maintain an Annual Research Plan which sets out NIFCA's work priorities and research plans between April 2024 and March 2025. The research plans are based on on-going priorities carried forward from NIFCA's 2024/25 Annual Research Plan, and new research based on recent issues/knowledge gaps. The plan sets out work to address these knowledge gaps to work towards NIFCA's aims and priorities, including sustainable fisheries and protection of MPAs.
5. To maintain awareness of national policies and workstreams and how they integrate with the IFCA remit.

Marine Protected Areas

6. There is a total of 10 MPAs in the NIFCA district. They are made up of two Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), five Special Protection Areas (SPAs), and three Marine Conservation Zones (MCZs):
 - Berwickshire and North Northumberland Coast SAC
 - Tweed Estuary SAC
 - Lindisfarne SPA
 - Farne Islands SPA
 - Coquet Island SPA
 - Northumbria Coast SPA
 - Northumberland Marine SPA
 - Coquet to St Mary's MCZ
 - Aln Estuary MCZ
 - Berwick to St Mary's MCZ

NIFCA is a competent and relevant Authority in relation to SACs and SPAs under the Habitats and Species Regulations (2019) and has a duty to fulfil conservation objectives to ensure that the qualifying features are either restored to, or maintained in, favourable condition. NIFCA has statutory duties under the Marine and Coastal Access Act to further the conservation objectives of any MCZ in the district.

In fulfilling duties in relation to MPAs in the district, NIFCA have implemented management to:

- prohibit the use of mobile gear and protecting seagrass within the Berwickshire North Northumberland Coast SAC (there are three small areas open, under authorisation to light otter trawl gear only within this site)
- restrict the use of mobile gear in Coquet to St Mary's MCZ to light otter trawl gear only, prohibiting the use of all other forms of mobile gear including scallop dredging.

NIFCA have other measures to regulate fishing activity within MPAs through the byelaws in place. NIFCA will continue to monitor activity within all sites through MPA Monitoring and Control Plans ensuring that the objectives and aims of the management plans for all MPAs in the district are met and enhanced (Success Criteria 1 & 3). NIFCA officers will remain cognizant

of relevant legislation in relation to MPAs and adapt working practices where necessary.

The NIFCA remit in relation to MPAs will continue to be achieved through NIFCA officers sitting on the management and steering groups of the Berwickshire and Northumberland Marine Nature Partnership and attending relevant meetings. During regular work at sea, IFCOs will continue to undertake extensive monitoring of commercial fishing activity occurring within the sites, the national roll out of I-VMS will also assist NIFCA in assessing fishing activity levels within MPAs. (Success Criterion 3).

Byelaws

7. To keep the Authority byelaws under continuous review and consider any representations made regarding the same and any other management measures brought in by the Authority, such as codes of conduct. During 2024 – 2025 with the members agreement, NIFCA will begin a statutory consultation of the Fixed Engine Byelaw with a view to replacing it with a Netting Byelaw following the review through 2023-2024. (Success Criteria 1 & 2).

Sustainable fisheries

8. To continue with the Authority's active support for lobster and brown crab sustainability including working with the local fishing industry, particularly on our lobster and brown crab biometric sampling programme, and analysis of permit returns data to inform long term management to ensure healthy stocks for the benefit of the marine environment and local fisheries.
9. To re-introduce the NIFCA lobster v-notching programme with the aim of v-notching mature females to protect them from the fishery for 2-3 years allowing them to complete multiple reproductive cycles. This conservation measure has been proven to support the sustainability of crustacea fisheries around the world.
10. To continue to support the Lobster Hatchery in the Authority district at Amble, with a wide range of benefits for stocks, the environment, the fishing industry, marine science, and education. (Success Criterion 1)
11. To build on knowledge of intertidal fisheries including hand gathering for periwinkle. To increase knowledge on bait collection for bait worms, mussel, and shore crab. NIFCA will use the information gathered to complete assessments to ensure that the activity is carried out in a sustainable way both for target species, associated communities and habitats (Success Criteria 3 and 5).
12. To continue to engage with the Recreational Sea Angling (RSA) sector building upon work carried out in 2021-2024 to continue the RSA strategy which enhances NIFCAs relationship with this sector.

Survey work

13. NIFCA survey work has been split into several workstreams (please see the NIFCA Annual Research Plan 2024-25 for a more detailed breakdown and explanation of the research planned. The plan broadly follows these themes:
 - a. Crustacea
 - Continuation of lobster and brown crab data collection through onboard observer surveys, quayside, and wholesaler sampling.
 - Re-introducing the v-notching scheme to purchase lobsters from wholesalers, v-notch, and release them back into the district where they will be protected from the fishery for multiple breeding cycles.
 - Temperature loggers on fishing pots to record at depth temperature to understand temperature changes in relation to catchability of the pot.

b. Mollusca

- Continuations of the periwinkle hand gathering impact assessment survey.
- Monitoring adherence the periwinkle and Blyth Estuary code of conduct.
- Annual mussel surveys at Blyth Estuary, Fenham Flats and Holy Island.

c. Angling, bait collection and hand gathering

- Continue successful engagement with recreational sea anglers.

d. Finfish

- AIn Estuary Fish Survey.
- Recreational Angling and Species Challenge catch data analysis.

e. Marine Protected Areas

- Finalise all outstanding assessments for the MPAs within the NIFCA district
- Continue the Monitoring and Control plan process to ensure the continued protection of MPAs and that the conservation objectives continue to be met and furthered.

f. General / national workstreams

- Recording sightings of fishing vessels on routine patrols / understand application of iVMS data analysis. Continued recording of intertidal activity sightings.
- Continue to develop and strengthen communications with members of the fishing industry. (Success Criteria 3 and 5).
- Fisheries Management Plans – contribute to the development and implementation of relevant plans and communicate key information to relevant stakeholders.
- Marine licencing / Marine Spatial Planning and Prioritisation – continue the process of responding to Marine Licence applications as a statutory consultee, contribute to the next stage of the North East Marine plan and the development of the Marine Spatial Prioritisation programme.

Support / partnership on external projects

14. NIFCA will continue to support a range of external projects with partner NIFCA have committed to partnership projects through this quarter for commencement in 2024. The delivery of this work is subject to the success of the funding application for each project. The level of commitment for each project in terms of time and resources differs for each project. There are multiple benefits to NIFCA from this type of project work including: use of the data and results; financial compensation for use of our time; vessels and equipment; experience for staff in different types of survey techniques; and the opportunity to work closely with key partner organisations. Please see a list of projects and partners below:

- Marine Natural Capital and Ecosystem Assessment (mNCEA) – Inshore Fish Monitoring. This work aims to test multiple methods to develop an evidence baseline for inshore fish communities across a variety of inshore habitats. Northumberland has been selected, along with Cornwall, to pilot a national strategy of inshore fish monitoring. NIFCA have been asked to carry out part of the field survey work. Partners: Natural England, Environment Agency, AIFCA.
- Marine Natural Capital and Ecosystem Assessment (mNCEA) – Sandbanks and Maerl in the Berwickshire and North Northumberland Coast SAC. The project aims to increase the information on the extent and quality of sandbank and maerl habitat in the BNNC SAC. NIFCA have been asked to carry out part of the field survey work. Partner: Natural England.
- Seabass Connectivity – The University of Essex are running a project to connect juvenile bass populations to adult populations. Anglers supply adult bass heads to the project for isotope and genomic analysis. NIFCA have been asked to store any bass heads dropped off and send them to the university in intervals. So far, two heads have been sent. Partner: University of Essex.
- Perceptions and Impacts of Seal Depredation on Inshore Fisheries – this project aims to assess seal depredation mitigation strategies and collect long term data for individual

fisheries to assess the frequency of depredation. This will include a range of activities such as workshops with fishers. NIFCA have been asked to provide a venue and attend a local workshop and provide a letter of support. Partner: University of Oxford.

- NIFCA are also a partner on two Newcastle University projects. One on Coastal Community Resilience which broadly aims to understand how different groups of people, including fishers, can influence coastal decision-making/resilience building. The other looking at fishing communities' resilience to climate change with an aim to facilitate adaptation. Partner: Newcastle University.

Joint working

15. To continue working in accordance with the national IFCA MoUs with the MMO, NE, EA and particularly the local Joint Working Arrangement (JWA) with each of those agencies (a copy of the JWA can be found on the Authority website), and with Cefas. NIFCA will also continue to work closely with commercial and recreational fishermen including recreational sea anglers, the Newcastle University School of Natural and Environmental Sciences, the Tweed Commission, Marine Scotland, Amble Development Trust/The Northumberland Seafood Centre, Northumbria Police, the Gangmaster and Labour Abuse Authority (GLAA) and other stakeholders to facilitate compliance with the IFCA's objectives and duties as resources permit. Also to continue Joint Working with other IFCA's through the Association of IFCA's, Chief Officers Group, National Inshore Marine Enforcement Group (NIMEG) and Technical Advisory Group (TAG). (Success Criterion 1).



To continue an active programme of meeting “key players”, partners and stakeholders, both informally in the district e.g. officers meeting commercial and recreational fishermen when on patrol in the district; and arranging and attending meetings with commercial fishermen, attending Recreational Sea Angling clubs and other stakeholders at events organised by the Authority with the aim of educating interested parties about the remit and work of the Authority; also meeting Parliamentary representatives regarding key issues and to raise the profile of the Authority and its work. (Success Criterion 1).

Funding and resources

16. To continue with an adequately resourced and proactive training programme for staff, with training for new Members and to facilitate continual training development of existing Members to the maximum possible extent. Training of staff will be reviewed through the Authority system of Review/Appraisals, which began in a revised and enhanced form in 2015. Staff and Members will be asked to contribute with ideas and suggestions for training and development. The Authority will seek to meet all reasonable and affordable needs in that respect. (Success Criterion 4).
17. To obtain additional funding sources where reasonably possible, including by chartering the Authority Patrol vessels, when possible, without detriment to the Authority remit.
18. To keep under review all evidence and data systems to ensure the best use of available evidence and that data is securely held and used appropriately in NIFCA decision making including in respect of the Intelligence system with the MMO. (Success Criteria 1 & 5).
19. NIFCA will also continue to have regard to the need for preservation of any features of archaeological or historic interest whenever or wherever that is possible in the district, although due to resource limitations, development of this area of work is limited. (Success Criterion 5).

Defra Guidance

20. To continue with adherence to the principles laid down in the Defra Guidance to IFCAs and as resources permit in:
 - a) The common enforcement framework
 - b) Evidence based Marine Management
 - c) Monitoring and Evaluation and Measuring Performance
 - d) Contributing to the Achievement of Sustainable Development
 - e) Annual Planning and Report
 - f) Byelaw Making Powers under the Marine and Coastal Access Act

NIFCA will also publicise, as required, all IFCA policies arising from that Guidance and keep each Guidance document and actions required under regular review.

Each of the targets/priorities will be kept under review and reported to quarterly meetings of the Authority, so that planning to tackle any gaps can be formulated and the implementation of findings can also commence. Measurement of attaining objectives can also take place at quarterly meetings and at sub-committee meetings where applicable.

4. Work Plan Summary 2024-25

The Work Plan for 2024-25 will continue to be based around the IFCA Vision and Success Criteria in section 2 of this plan and Local Targets and Priorities in section 3. NIFCA will continue to be alert and agile regarding developments arising from the Fisheries Act 2020, particularly in relation to the Joint Fisheries Statement (JFS) and Fisheries Management Plans (FMPs) the first of which have now been published including crab and lobster which will be the main FMP for the Northumberland district, NIFCA will continue to develop its own fisheries plans and work appropriately with Defra on the planning and development of future fisheries management as it affects NIFCA and the Northumberland district and beyond.

Towards attaining its goals, NIFCA will follow and keep under review its staff policies and continue with periodic planning meetings of the Senior Management Team and enforcement and environmental IFCOs. Enforcement work will continue on a risk and intelligence led basis as referred to below, as well as Tactical Coordination Groups (TCGs), which have been developed successfully by NIFCA together with the MMO and other IFCAs since 2015. The work of enforcement, by means of patrols and surveillance in the district (at sea and on land) and particularly including targeted activity where deemed to be necessary, as well as intelligence led activity further enhanced with access to the national Clue Intelligence Database and Case Management System in the year ahead. The Authority's environmental and scientific team of well qualified officers will also continue with their work in respect of monitoring key fisheries and Marine Protected Area, incorporating national policy areas (such as FMPs) into NIFCA workstreams, survey work, reports and research, guided by the Authority's Annual Research Plan.

With additional Defra funding, NIFCA have in post an added full time EIFCO working on Marine licence applications and responses and supporting the Environment team. From April we are recruiting a further post to support on finalising the MPA obligations to meet the 2024 deadline for assessments and management, where required. All IFCO work will be kept under review both at and between scheduled meetings led by the Chief Officer, so that all current and foreseeable eventualities are dealt with in a timely and efficient manner. The Authority staff review /appraisals system also benefits officers, staff and the Authority by providing a process in respect of carrying out duties, as well as establishing individual learning needs and helping officers and staff to plan and develop their careers with NIFCA.

The Chief Officer will continue to oversee the efficient output of all the work of NIFCA to feed into the continued attainment of the IFCA Vision, Success Criteria and Local Targets and Priorities.

The NIFCA Finance Officer will follow the Authority budget plan, financial regulations and financial targets which have been laid down for the year ahead and liaise as necessary with the Northumberland County Council Audit Team. He will also report on at least a weekly basis to the Chief Officer on NIFCA's financial performance and quarterly or more often when required to the Authority Finance and full Committees. Efficiencies will be sought wherever possible throughout the organisation to maximise value for money and delivery of targets and priorities. Capital expenditure will also be carefully planned and monitored by the Chief Officer, reporting to the Authority Membership. The question of maintaining and building up the Authority's Patrol Vessel (PV) fund towards future PV procurement will also remain a priority. Following a review of the fund and projected timeline to replacement, members agreed to increase annual contributions to this fund.

Continuation of all necessary training of officers and staff will also be firmly embedded in the work plan and reviewed periodically.

Health and Safety is a key priority for NIFCA. All officers and staff will continue to adhere to the NIFCA Health and Safety Policy which is kept under review and up to date, with the Health and Safety Officer meeting on a quarterly basis to review Health and Safety with the Enforcement and Environmental leads reporting also on a quarterly basis to meetings of the Authority and will also work closely with the NIFCA Engineer in respect of NIFCA vessels and equipment.

During its fourteenth year, NIFCA will remain conscious of the need to promote and communicate the work of the Authority and wider Defra policy areas and developments under the NIFCA Stakeholder

Engagement and Communication Strategy. The strategy will continue to be undertaken to maximise the benefits of relationships with stakeholders and the wider public. This process of engagement is also aided by strong local knowledge of officers and staff enabling proactive steps to be taken most effectively where necessary and any issues to be dealt with appropriately and fairly.

NIFCA will also continue nurturing its existing external relationships with other stakeholders including (with the aid of National Memoranda of Understanding) the MMO, Natural England, Environment Agency and Cefas. In addition, the Joint Working Arrangement developed locally by NIFCA with the MMO, NE and EA provides an excellent programme for joint planning and criteria to fulfil each party's objectives in the NIFCA district. The existing strong local relations will also be built upon with the Authority's two constituent local authorities, the local fishing fleet, Newcastle University with whom there is a MoU and also with recreational and other sea users in the district. There is also an MoU with the Tweed Commission who we maintain regular contact with and joint working when required will also be maintained with the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority (GLAA) and Northumbria Police. Professional relations with the fishing fleet across the border in south east Scotland and the Marine Directorate representatives in Policy and Compliance will also continue to be nurtured.



AIFCA/NIFCA stand at the NEC, Birmingham

The Chief Officer (working also with the Authority Environmental IFCO team in particular) will also ensure that the Authority continues to participate fully in such community based projects as may be possible and bring all of our knowledge and expertise to bear, including but not limited to the Amble Lobster Hatchery, Coast Care, North East Cetacean Group, Lindisfarne National Nature Reserve, the Cullercoats Harbour Board and the Port of Blyth Users Group, a continued contribution to the Trinity House engagement work and provision of an evening with our joint partners for sea cadets, as well as liaising with the Fishermen's Associations and Sea Angling Clubs in the district. Online events will also be participated in, to the fullest extent possible.

The Chief Officer and Chairman (or Vice Chairman) will continue with their roles on behalf of NIFCA as a member of the Association of IFCAs. The Authority Chair, Les Weller who is also Vice Chair of the Association of IFCAs, regrettably will be standing down with his forthcoming retirement at the end of April 2024. Les has been vice chair of the AIFCA for 4 years and has been a tireless campaigner and moderniser of the work of the AIFCA and IFCAs nationally. The Chief Officer is (like other IFCA Heads of Service) a director of the Association of IFCAs (Company Limited by Guarantee). The Chief Officer and Lead Enforcement IFCO will also continue NIFCA participation in the national Chief Officers Group and NIMEG effectively. Environmental officers will also attend the periodic meetings of TAG.

5. Resources

Premises

The Authority moved to its current premises at 8 Ennerdale Road, Blyth in September 2013. A new 10-year lease with a 5-year break clause has been agreed with the landlord, FES Ltd, and is in the process of being finalised. The new agreement anticipates that there will be an increase in annual rent from **£27,500** to **£30,000** during year 3 of the new lease. A programme of refurbishments and remedial work which will enhance the utility of the premises is currently underway and is expected to be completed before the end of March 2024 at a budgeted cost of **£35,000**.

Vessels and Vehicles

The Authority's main patrol vessel, berthed at Royal Quays Marina in North Shields, is a 16m GRP catamaran named St Aidan which it acquired in April 2015. The vessel cost **£680,000** and was financed entirely from the Authority's own reserves. St Aidan is equipped with an on-board 5.3m RIB named TT St Aidan which can also operate independently of the main vessel and be mounted on a trailer and towed to onshore launch areas for sea patrols and survey work.

The Authority also owns 9m cabin RIB, the Robert Arckless MBE which came into service in August 2019. The total cost of the new cabin RIB was a little under **£150,000**, around 70% of which was financed by EMFF grant funding. The cabin RIB is berthed at Amble Marina and can function as an additional patrol vessel as well as carry out survey work.



NIFCA cabin RIB "Robert Arckless MBE"

In addition, the Authority owns a 3.4m Zodiac inflatable purchased in 2013 at a cost of **£1,700**. This is used principally for estuary survey work.

The Authority currently maintains service level agreements with Northumberland County Council for the hire and maintenance of 2 pool vehicles, with the aim of keeping to a minimum the number of times it is necessary for Authority personnel to use their own vehicles for work purposes. The leased pool vehicles consist of a 2 litre Ford Ranger 4x4 and a 1.5 litre Ford Connect minivan. Both vehicles were acquired in 2020 on 5-year lease agreements, at an annual cost of **£5,850** and **£4,540** respectively. In March 2024 the Authority purchased outright an additional pool vehicle - a 2nd hand (2019) 1.6L Citroen Berlingo minivan - at a cost of **£10,995**. These vehicles are used for shore patrols, survey work and general Authority business.

Financial - Estimated Reserves

General Reserves are forecast to be **£234,380** at the beginning of April 2024 after adding the projected net budget surplus of **£62,100** whilst deducting expected Capital Expenditure drawings of **£45,500** for the 23-24 period. The capital expenditure includes an expected total cost of **35K** for ongoing remedial work and improvements to the office (see Premises above) and **10.5K** already spent on a new trailer, RIB camera and HYPACK survey software. It is anticipated that a further **5K** will be drawn from the Reserves during the 24-25 financial period to pay for new drysuits for the IFCOs. General reserves are forecast to increase to **£248,479** by 31 March 2025 due to an anticipated budget surplus of **£19,100** for 2024-25.

The Renewals Fund, which comprises the funds set aside for eventual replacement of the patrol vessels, is projected to be **£696,630** by 1st April 2024 after the annual transfer of **42K** from precepted revenue plus an expected **16K** from bank interest. The Fund is forecast to rise by a further **£68,000** (50K increased annual contribution from Precept and 18K in bank interest) to **£764,630** by 31 March 2025.

Budget

Authority members confirmed approval in January 2024 of a standstill in local authority precept at **791K** (excluding "New Burdens" – see below) for 2024-25.

Defra have confirmed that they will continue to support IFCAs with the same level of "New Burdens" funding up to 2024-25. Therefore, this Authority will receive a little under **155K** from Defra via local authority precept for 2024-25.

In addition to New Burdens, the Authority is due to receive 3 more **R-DEL** (Resource Departmental Expenditure Limits) payments totalling **140K** from Defra by the end of the 2023-24 period with a further 3 payments totalling **130K** expected by the end of 2024-25. These additional monies are to be spent in support of key policy objectives including the support of national Fisheries Management Plans (FMP's) that will implement the objectives of the Fisheries Act 2020, as well as having management measures in place for all Marine Protected Areas where needed by 2024, good environmental status and the development of the Benthic Trawling strategy in addition to supporting resources for key policy areas for marine licensing.

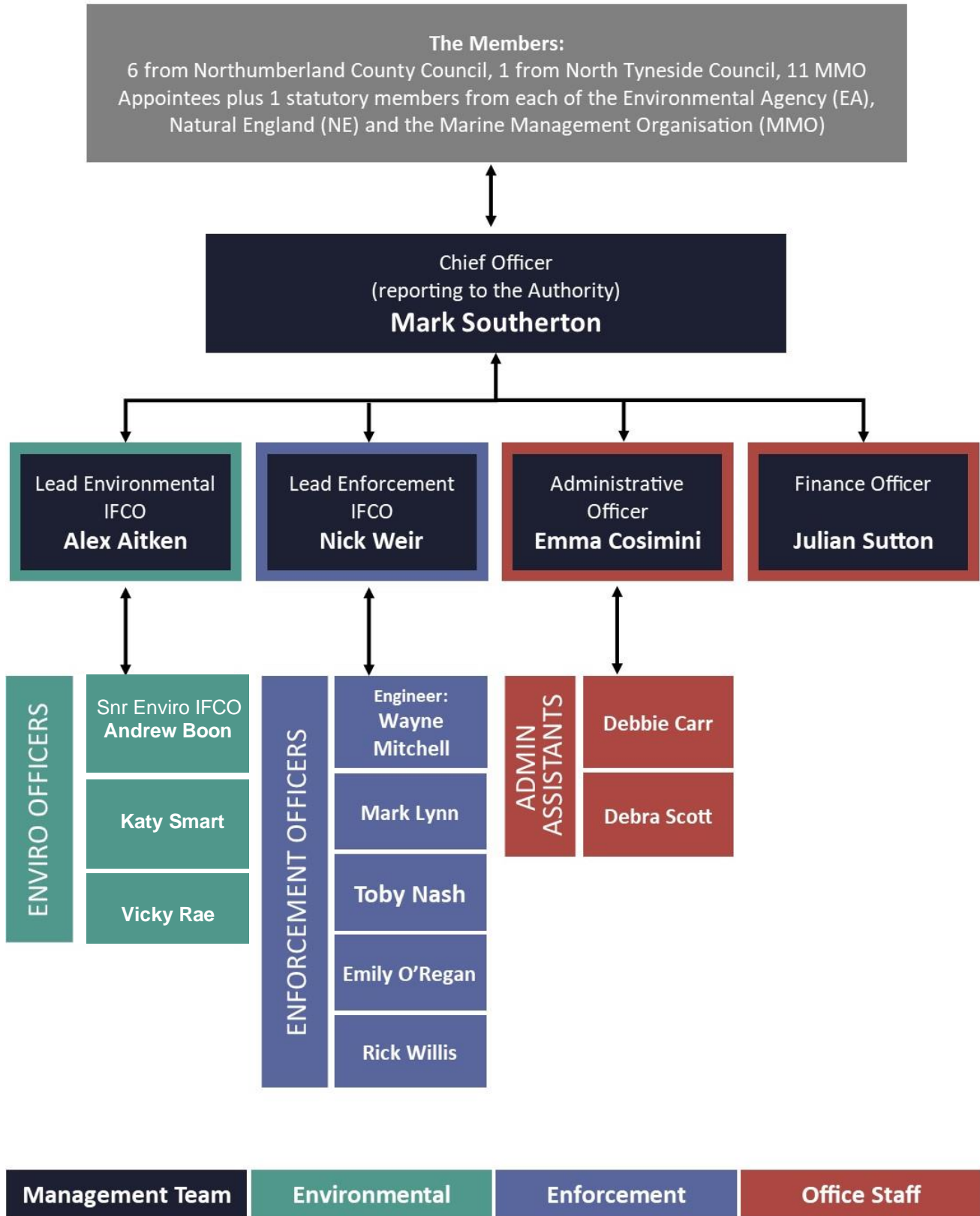
It is anticipated that the salaries of 2 Environmental IFCOs who will be working full-time in support of the above objectives will be paid out of the R-Del funding rather than from the precepted salary budget for 2024/25. The R-Del monies are not included in the 24-25 precepted budget estimates as they are expected to be budget-neutral.

The Authority's budget forecast below will be kept under review and reported quarterly to the board of this Authority. Particular attention will be given to reducing running costs wherever possible, seeking to increase income by way of grants, vessel chartering and maintaining appropriate levels of reserves whilst building up the Renewals fund to purchase replacement vessels in the future.

6. NIFCA - Summary of agreed budget estimates 2024 - 2025

<u>Expenditure</u>	2024/25
	£
Employee expenses	631,230
Patrol vessel expenses	51,500
Leased vehicles/RIB expenses	40,600
Other operating expenses	39,900
8 Ennerdale Road expenses	52,600
Conference & training expenses	18,300
Other management expenses	57,800
contingencies	10,000
	<hr/>
Total expenditure	901,930
<u>Income</u>	2024/25
	£
Northumberland County Council precept	788,308
North Tyneside Council precept	157,245
Other income	43,477
	<hr/>
Total income	989,030
Annual revenue contribution to Renewals Fund	50,000
Other transfers to Renewals Fund	18,000
Overall revenue surplus	19,100

7. Structure of Organisation



8. Membership

The table below shows the Authority membership at the end of March 2024.

The Northumberland Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority is funded by 2 constituent authorities: Northumberland County Council (NCC) and North Tyneside Council (NTC) with 6 members from NCC and 1 member from NTMC on the Authority. To maximise democratic accountability a majority of the 7 Local Authority Members voting on the Authority Budget must approve its passing. In addition, there are 10 MMO appointed “General Members” and 1 representative (staff member) from each of the government agencies, Environment Agency (EA), Natural England (NE) and Marine Management Organisation (MMO). Please see membership table below:

Name	Affiliation
Mr L Weller (Chair)	General Member
Councillor Mr G Renner-Thompson (Vice Chair)	Northumberland County Council
Councillor Colin Hardy	Northumberland County Council
Councillor Mr B Burdis	North Tyneside Council
Councillor Alex Wallace	Northumberland County Council
Councillor Ms E Dunn	Northumberland County Council
Mr P Dent	General Member
Ms S Ingram	Marine Management Organisation Representative
Ms Amelia Henderson	General Member
Dr Martin Kitching	General Member
Mr S Lowe	General Member
Mr P Gray	Environment Agency representative
Councillor Martin Swinbank	Northumberland County Council
Councillor Mrs C Seymour	Northumberland County Council
Dr C Scott	Natural England representative
Mr J Stephenson	General Member
Mr I E Thomas	General Member
Mr F Armstrong	General Member
Professor P Moore	General Member
Dr James Wood	General Member
Mr Michael Nugent	General Member

9. Staffing and Service Standards

Service Description

NIFCA has a strong and dedicated workforce with a high level of expertise and commitment in all aspects of the work being undertaken. The workforce forms an excellent team for delivery of all objectives on a daily, weekly and annual basis. The office staff and IFCO officers will always be open and transparent with stakeholders.

In the office:

Chief Officer	<p>Mark Southerton</p> <p>Head of service with responsibility for the overall and day-to-day management of the organisation and strategic planning including in respect of the roles of staff and officers, with ultimate responsibility in addition for: Budget control, policy implementation, public relations, Byelaw review, liaison with other organisations, health and safety, data protection and freedom of information, legal management, human resources issues including staff welfare, training, disciplinary and grievance matters and Appraisals, preparation of reports, managing arrangements for internal and external meetings and membership liaison. Senior Management Team staff appraisals. Plus, where required Skipper Patrol Vessel, Enforcement Duties including Coxswain of Authority RIBs.</p>
Finance Officer	<p>Julian Sutton</p> <p>Budget control and maintaining financial records.</p>
Administrative Officer (part-time)	<p>Emma Cosimini</p> <p>Line Manager for administration team: management of office functions including developing and maintaining office systems, providing HR support, maintaining personnel and data records, ordering and purchasing, maintenance of IT and website and GDPR. Admin Staff Appraisals</p>
Admin Assistant (part-time)	<p>Deborah Carr</p> <p>Maintenance of day-to-day office duties including management of office filing systems, ordering and purchasing, managing correspondence and other administrative support.</p>
Admin Assistant (part-time)	<p>Debra Scott</p> <p>Maintenance of day-to-day office duties including updating office systems, permit and returns management, managing correspondence and other administrative support.</p>

Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Officers (“IFCOs”)

Lead Enforcement Inshore Fisheries & Conservation Officer	Nick Weir Line Manager for Enforcement Team. Management of enforcement duties including joint working and liaising with other organisations as applicable. Skipper of patrol vessel/coxswain of Authority RIBs. Operational IFCO Appraisals, timesheets and expenses. Managing all safety equipment for officers with the Chief Officer. Management of prosecution files and liaison with Authority prosecuting lawyers. Assisting Environmental Team regarding survey work.
Lead Environmental Inshore Fisheries & Conservation Officer	Alex Aitken Line Manager for Environmental Team including health and safety, timesheets and expenses. Overseeing Authority conservation work including marine and environmental issues, developing research programmes and the Authority work in relation to EMS, MCZs and SEA. Liaison with Authority IFCOs (Environmental), Chief Officer and other IFCOs as necessary, liaise with other organisations as applicable. Environmental IFCO Appraisals. Where required, Enforcement Officer duties including Coxswain of Authority RIBs.
Senior Environmental Inshore Fisheries & Conservation Officer	Andrew Boon Authority environmental and conservation work in conjunction with and reporting to the Lead Environmental IFCO and Chief Officer. Duties include the development of research priorities, MPA assessments, survey work, report writing, stakeholder engagement, attending meetings, responding to consultations and enforcement duties as required.
Engineer/Skipper	Wayne Mitchell Engineer for Authority patrol vessels. Maintenance of Authority’s vessels and equipment. Skipper of St. Aidan and Crew/Coxswain of Authority RIBs. Assist in enforcement operations and support Environmental Team regarding survey work.
Inshore Fisheries & Conservation Officer (part-time)	Ricky Willis Enforcement officer duties, Intel management, vessel crew/Coxswain of Authority’s RIBs. Assist Environmental Team regarding survey work. TCG meetings.
Inshore Fisheries & Conservation Officer (part-time)	Mark Lynn Enforcement officer duties, Intel management, vessels crew/Coxswain of Authority’s RIBs. Assist Environmental Team regarding survey work. TCG meetings.
Inshore Fisheries & Conservation Officer	Emily O’Regan Enforcement officer duties, Intel management, vessel crew/Coxswain of Authority’s RIBs. Assist Environmental Team regarding survey work. TCG meetings.
Inshore Fisheries & Conservation Officer	Toby Nash Enforcement officer duties, Intel management, vessel crew/Coxswain of Authority’s RIBs. Assist Environmental Team regarding survey work. TCG meetings.
Environmental IFCO	Katy Smart Working as part of the Authority Environmental Team and reporting to the Lead Environmental IFCO Duties include research, MPA assessments, survey work, report writing, stakeholder engagement, attending meetings, responding to consultations and enforcement duties as required.
Environmental IFCO	Vicky Rae Working as part of the Authority Environmental Team and reporting to the Lead Environmental IFCO. Duties include marine licensing applications and consents, survey work, report writing, stakeholder engagement, attending meetings, responding to consultations.

Footnote: The Authority is now recruiting for an additional Environmental Officer / Enforcement IFCO to join in 2024.

Service Standards

The Authority Officers all have a base within the Authority office where they meet to prepare for duties ashore and at sea on the Authority vessels and vehicles. They also attend the office for meetings and administrative support. The Authority's vehicles and other equipment are stored at the Authority office and patrols commence from the office.

Officers will continue to operate in the district on a carefully managed, intelligence led/risk-based basis which will be more effective with access to data through the Inshore Vessel Monitoring Service (IVMS) for all <12 metre vessels when the legislation is in place in 2024. This will ensure that Officers can see real time fleet activity within the district and react to risks in a targeted and timelier manner.



Chief Officer with Enforcement Team on St. Aidan

Other staff are also primarily based at the Authority office. However, blended working from home when appropriate is still an option for some individuals depending on circumstances, and the Authority's ability to maintain the overall effectiveness of the service for stakeholders. This hybrid working arrangement will continue in 2024-5.

The main overall roles of the Authority will continue to be the management and enforcement of fisheries and conservation legislation at sea and ashore in the Authority district; the collection of data through research and survey work (practical and desk based) to inform management and with a continuation of projects including with Newcastle University and supported by Natural England; management and maintenance of physical resources; administration including finance, data protection, record keeping and preparation for meetings; providing advice (official consultations, general fisheries and environmental enquiries and ad hoc stakeholder enquiries); and acting as intermediary and facilitator in respect of our remit.

The objectives of NIFCA entail providing a professional, effective, efficient and equitable enforcement regime in the NIFCA district; ensuring the best possible fishery and conservation management practices and research techniques are utilised; continuing to maintain and monitor standards of performance; providing stakeholders and the general public with information and/or data and improving access

thereto; and meeting with stakeholders to provide information and receive feedback.

Service Delivery Priorities

By a proactive enforcement regime throughout the district a high quality of patrols and enforcement will continue to be achieved. There will also be reports to the Authority on a quarterly and annual basis and more frequently when required setting out the activities of the Authority measured against the IFCA Vision, Success Criteria and Local Priorities. Technical and research documentation will be produced to a high standard and made publicly available both in paper and electronic form. Research opportunities will be practically identified and developed with appropriate levels of reaction to consultation and similar documents. There will also be involvement in other activities that could have an impact on fisheries and the marine environment in the district.

The IFCA will also continue to collect data from permit returns in accordance with Byelaw provision, as well as other data which is collected to inform and support management. In addition, the IFCA will seek external funding support wherever possible for relevant projects.

As part of NIFCA's customer care, the following standards have been set so that customers know what to expect when dealing with the Authority and staff.

Employees will: -

- Identify themselves when dealing with anyone for the first time.
- Answer telephone calls within 5 rings whenever possible.
- Answer letters and emails or send a holding communication within 5 working days of receipt.
- Deal with complaints in a prompt considerate manner in accordance with NIFCA's policy
- Be courteous and endeavour to be helpful at all times.
- Provide information on services and facilities.

Since the inception of NIFCA the above service standards have been adhered to very satisfactorily by NIFCA and its officers/staff. It is intended to maintain and wherever possible enhance that high level of performance in 2024-25.

10. Governance Summary

NIFCA is principally governed by its system of quarterly meetings of the membership. We are pleased to resume our tradition of visiting different areas of the district in the coming year to ensure we are available to as many stakeholders as possible, with our first Quarterly Meeting of the new financial year being held at East Bedlington Community Centre. We will also look at previous successful venues including Northumberland County Council County Hall in Morpeth, The Hub Seahouses and The Quadrant, North Tyneside Council, Silverlink, North Shields.

Our quarterly meetings take place on the fourth Monday of every January, April (which is the Authority annual meeting), July and October. The Authority remains open to the possibility of virtual attendance (via Microsoft Teams) for members/the public who are unable to attend in person but wish to be present. Of course, it is Authority practice that only members attending in person can vote on Authority matters, as stipulated by national government requirements.

Governance is regulated by the Northumberland Inshore Fisheries Conservation Order 2010, the NIFCA Constitution, Standing Orders and Code of Conduct for Members, of which all documents are kept under review and updated when required. The Standing Orders provide a procedure to arrange extraordinary meetings if required.

The Authority also has member and staff handbooks for the reference, as well as a strong suite of policies providing the necessary framework for the day to day running and management of the Authority, which are also kept under review.

NIFCA has two standing committees of members which meet prior to each quarterly meeting and report to the main NIFCA Committee – the Watch Committee deals particularly with issues relating to the patrol vessel, enforcement and staff matters and the Finance Committee particularly considers the Authority budget and is reported to by the Finance Officer and Chief Officer.

Subcommittees are established when necessary to look at specific issues and report to the main committee for example in relation to byelaw review.

The above system and governance documentation is kept under review by the Chief Officer with the support of the Senior Management team and in consultation with the Authority Members. Other views from officers and staff and stakeholders are also considered, with any necessary amendments made as required.

Members will be consulted by the Chief Officer regarding any re-arrangement of meetings or Authority business which may need to be considered and there will also be liaison with fishers and other stakeholders in the district as referred to elsewhere in this report

11. Training and Development Plan

NIFCA continues its commitment to the training and development of staff and members to maximise their knowledge and ability to carry out their roles fully and effectively within the Authority, with due regard to resources limitations and therefore aiming for the best standard of training and development in the most cost-effective way possible. Training and development continues to be reviewed and developed to address all areas of relevance to the Authority's operation on an ongoing basis. Issues in the Authority work planning can be converted over time into an individual personal working objective. By thus investing in the NIFCA staff, their value to the organisation and the respect in which they are held as individuals by NIFCA and stakeholders is demonstrated and maintained. NIFCA continues to fully support national training in the form of the Competent Officer course which is delivered via Kent and Essex IFCA but supported by officers from a number of IFCAs. The system of staff Appraisals established by The Northumberland Sea Fisheries Committee (NSFC) and continued and developed by NIFCA Performance Review and Appraisals is also designed so that individual staff input including concerns and suggestions is maximised and aspirations addressed and met where possible.

Training will be through a variety of media, including but not limited to formal classroom teaching and including where applicable learning, mentoring and role play, as well as experience on the job and following the pandemic an increased use of online learning.

The attached schedule at page 30 of this document confirms the training plan for officers and staff in 2024-25, (with provision also to be made where possible and required for members). Particularly, this will ensure fulfilment of the statutory safety courses and enforcement training which the officers are required to undertake.

The national IFCAs TAG, as well as providing important support to all IFCAs in respect of their environmental and scientific work, is also an excellent forum for the ongoing development of attending IFCA officers. Similarly, in respect of the National Inshore Marine Enforcement Group (NIMEG).

Administrative staff and our Finance Officer will also undertake such courses as are necessary both to maintain the standards of their work and for personal development and this process will be kept under review particularly by the Chief Officer and Administrative Officer.

Officer and staff training requirements will be agreed and kept under review with every member of staff during annual Performance Reviews / Appraisals.



Joint Working with RNLi

Members

New Authority Members are offered induction training by the Chief Officer and Chair. Further training will continue to be offered to members in 2024-25, particularly by way of ongoing events and presentations to be arranged and also by way of guidance from the Authority office by way of reports and information and at Authority meetings, as well as members on a structured and secure basis being able to shadow and support the work of IFCOs working on surveys if applicable. As part of the above, members will be briefed as much as possible on subjects which will or may impact upon or affect any core interest they may have. Recently further training in the way of briefing sessions have been hosted by the AIFCA to further support members and IFCA staff in their understanding and decision-based roles, these briefing sessions are recorded and hosted on the NIFCA website for future members to access, presentations including Decision Making and Specialist Advice, IFCA's and Natural Capital and Marine Planning and Licensing.

As the work of the Authority continues to develop, options for training will be brought to the members' attention wherever possible and members will continue to be encouraged to participate in the same and suggest any training sessions which they think will be useful.

Annual Training Schedule 2024-25

List of Proposed Courses/Training

Name of Type of Course/Training	Attendance
First Aid at work (Seafish) + Defib training	3 x IFCOs
Personal Survival Techniques (South Tyneside Marine College)	1 x IFCOs
Basic Fire Fighting and Fire Awareness (South Tyneside Marine College) (refresher) (1 day full)	1 x IFCOs
Manual Handling (in house) (new starters)	1 x IFCO
IFCO (new starters) Induction Training	1 x IFCO
Competent Officer Training (Torquay Course) (practical)	3 x IFCOs
RYA Advanced Powerboat Course (Oceanic Sea School)	1 x IFCOs
Advanced IFCO Course	2 x IFCOs
GVC drone training (Heliguy)	2 x IFCOs
Fishing Gear Training	All IFCOs
MCA Approved Engine Course Part 1	1 x IFCO
Data Protection / Security Training	All IFCOs
Social Media Training	All Admin Team
CLUE Intelligence System Training	All IFCO's
Environment Agency Cross Warranting Training	6 IFCO's

The need for additional courses (including for members) will be monitored, arranged where necessary and within budget and reported on an on-going basis to meetings of the Authority.



12. Strategic Planning

The ability of NIFCA to plan in the long term is influenced particularly by financial constraints, including the prevailing level of financial certainty and secondly by the national/strategic situation in relation to inshore fisheries and the marine environment, particularly with the changes due to Brexit and the increased cost of living crisis in particular with the increases in costs for energy and raw materials as a result of the ongoing conflict in Ukraine.

In the former of the above cases, a well-managed budget and reserves, with funding provided primarily by Northumberland County Council and North Tyneside Council (including “New Burdens Funding” supplied by Defra and confirmed to 24/25) and additional funding streams “RDEL” (revenue delivery) gives the level of certainty required to operate an effective budget and plan for the year ahead, whilst being aware of contingencies which may arise outside of the control of the Authority and for which a reasonable level of financial provision is made in the Authority budget.

Together with a strong workforce, support of our knowledgeable membership and strong relationships with partner agencies and stakeholders, the Authority is thus in an excellent position to undertake its function in the year ahead. In doing that and looking further ahead still, the Authority is also always conscious of the constant financial pressure faced by IFCA’s principal funders, their constituent local authorities. However, the Authority will continue to plan beyond 2024-25 as much as possible, confirmation regarding the continuation of New Burdens Funding by DEFRA until 24/25 has been agreed. In this situation, it is felt to be reasonable but difficult for the Authority to look ahead at least to the IFCA financial year 2025-26 and the foreseeable range of possibilities which there may then be in taking a strategic approach.

In that regard, the Authority is particularly conscious of the Joint Fisheries Statement by Defra and the UK devolved Governments under the provisions of the Fisheries Act 2020 and the development and implementation of the 42 Fisheries Management Plans, which are in various stages. The Authority is also conscious of Defra’s 25 Year Environment Plan and its relevance to IFCAs, which will be particularly considered and advised upon by the Authority’s Environmental Officers on an ongoing basis. NIFCA in its work will also in the years ahead support the Defra objectives with additional RDEL funding to support those policy objectives, a cleaner, healthier environment, benefiting people and the economy (regarding which we will work to support cleaner, healthier, more productive and biologically diverse seas and support a sustainable seafood sector), support the objective of world leading food and farming industry (so far as applicable to the NIFCA remit), support the objective of a rural economy in the marine sector that works for everyone, contributing to national productivity, prosperity and wellbeing and also support the objective of a nation better protected against floods, animal and plant diseases and other hazards, with strong response and recovery capabilities (again, so far as applicable to the NIFCA remit). At the same time NIFCA has demonstrated the ability to adapt and respond appropriately in the most extreme and unusual of circumstances. In addition, the provisions of the Environment Act 2021, as it may affect NIFCA and its remit, will be acted on and monitored where required. Having renewed a new 10 year lease, the NIFCA office on Ennerdale Road is having investment made to the building to ensure it is fit for purpose for the next 10 years, following agreement by the Authority. The continued operation and upkeep of the Authority vessels will give the Authority and its stakeholders the assurance of continued capability at sea well beyond 2024-25, both within the Authority’s current district out to six miles. The Authority will also prioritise financial planning for patrol vessel and RIB replacement when that is required in the future, although that is unlikely in the next 10 years. Recent changes in the UK Shipbuilding Strategy now enables Local Authority vessels to be within scope when funding is available, and Defra have confirmed funding will become available over the coming years as part of CDEL (capital delivery) programme which will be hugely beneficial for those IFCAs looking to replace offshore vessel assets. In the event of the Authority being given additional duties and burdens within and/or beyond its present geographic limit then additional resources would be sought to ensure its existing as well as any new remit is fulfilled. All the NIFCA planning for the future is based on the fact that since inception we have proved adaptable and agile when dealing with additional or different requirements from those previously undertaken, strong examples of which can be seen in the area of Marine Protected Areas.

NIFCA also sees the increase in collaborative working with partner agencies including the MMO, Environment Agency, Natural England, Newcastle University, Tweed Commission and Marine Scotland, as being an ongoing trend into the future. This is something, particularly with our strong local relations with these organisations, that we will be able to continue to embrace. NIFCA brings to collaborative working the unique and distinctive features of our organisation including our strong local knowledge and relationships to ensure effective partnership working with strong and sustainable outputs.

Looking through 2024-25 and beyond into the following IFCA year, we will continue to follow clear principles as outlined in the IFCA Vision and Success Criteria, with a particular emphasis on our local targets and priorities as outlined in this Annual Plan, whilst being always ready to adapt and take on fresh challenges which may arise. We will also develop our planning and reporting in respect of Defra's new requirements regarding key performance indicators and metrics for the work of the Authority. In addition, we will continue to have the Authority policies set by our committed and knowledgeable membership working in conjunction with our officers and with delivery of policy by the said officers, reporting to quarterly meetings of the Authority. Risk will continue to be assessed and managed and intelligence will be appropriately gathered and utilised by the Authority, to ensure fulfilment of our remit by our well-trained workforce to protect the stocks and environment with which we have been blessed in our district.

Finally, and as referred to in the Introduction to this report and the Risk Matrix in the following pages, we will continue to give due focus to how climate change may affect inshore fisheries and the marine environment in the NIFCA district and how the Authority may respond; while recognising the Authority's own carbon footprint and to minimise as much as practicable with the development of our own policy in this important area, which will further support the UK net zero by 2050 target.



*Brittle Star image taken by
SeaSpyder*



**RISK ASSESSMENT MATRIX FOR NORTHUMBERLAND
INSHORE FISHERIES AND CONSERVATION AUTHORITY**
FORMING A PART OF THE NIFCA ANNUAL PLAN

L = Likelihood | I = Impact | S = Score

Objectives:

To manage and regulate inshore sea fisheries in Northumberland and other duties particularly as laid down in the Marine & Coastal Access Act 2009 including:

- Enforcement of byelaws and other legislation.
- Supply fishing permits to approximately 123 commercial fishers (plus pot tags to 85 of these who target shellfish) and pot tags to presently 267 recreational fishers.
- Provision of advice to permit holders and wider community.
- And as referred to in the national IFCA Vision, Success Criteria and other objectives in NIFCA Strategic documents and reports including the NIFCA Annual Plan and Report.
- Ensure the sustainability of fishing practices for a healthy marine environment and viable fishing industry into the future.

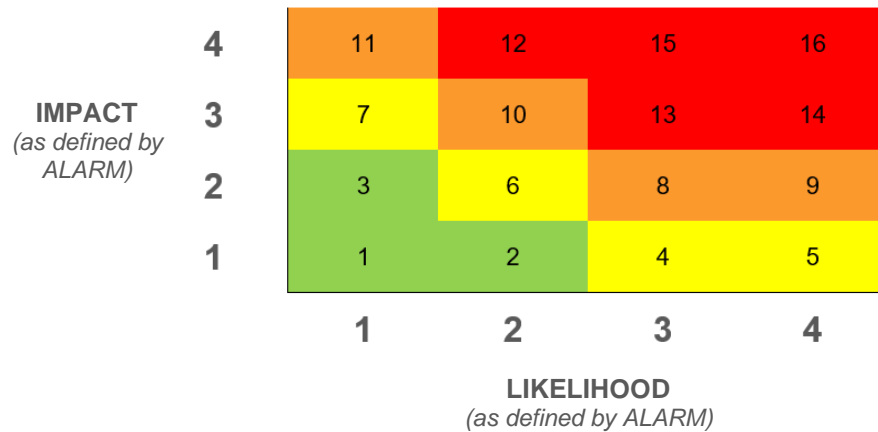
Risks marked *** are those which will be particularly affected by any resurgence in COVID.

This document is reviewed twice a year by a working group comprising the Chief Officer, Finance Officer, Admin Officer and Lead Officers for Environmental and Enforcement

Year	Review 1	Review 2
2010	18/02/10	03/08/10
2011	22/02/11	28/09/11
2012	05/07/12	---
2013	27/03/13	8/11/13
2014	16/12/14	---
2015	01/07/15	---
2016	23/02/16	19/09/16
2017	24/03/17	18/09/17
2018	19/03/18	18/09/18
2019	15/03/19	18/09/19
2020	17/03/20	21/09/20
2021	19/03/21	07/10/21
2022	17/03/22	27/10/22
2023	14/3/23	16/10/23
Date of Next Review	April 2024	

Officers present at latest review on 16th October 2023
Chief Officer – Mark Southerton Finance Officer – Julian Sutton Lead Officer (Enviro) – Alex Aitken Lead Officer (Enforce) – Nick Weir

Once risks have been graded, they may then be reflected on a risk matrix, which acts as a useful aid to provide focus on key risk areas. By plotting impact and likelihood on the matrix, an assessment of the overall risk can be made. NIFCA’s risk matrix is as follows (the colour coding is explained below, under “risk classification“):



Risk classification:

NIFCA has agreed broad classifications reflecting the residual risks which it faces. These are as follows:

Acceptable: risks where any action to further reduce the level of risk would be inefficient, i.e. the cost in time or resource outweigh any potential impact of the risk. Such risks include infrequent events with low impact. These risks are being effectively managed, and are coloured green on the matrix, scored as 1-3.

Manageable: risks which can be reduced within a reasonable timescale, in a cost-effective manner. Any mitigating actions must be monitored and recorded. Manageable risks are coloured yellow on the matrix, scored as 4-7.

Serious: risks which have a serious impact, and detrimental effect on the achievement of objectives. Action plans should be developed to reduce the level of residual risk and reviewed periodically. Serious risks are shown as orange on the matrix, scored as 8-11.

Very severe: risks which could have a potential disastrous effect of the organisation without immediate comprehensive action to reduce the level of risk. Very severe risks are those on the matrix coloured red, scored as 12 or more.

Ref for review	Risk	Controls	L	I	S	Monitoring Process	Responsibility	Further Action Required	Date of Last Review	Date of Next Review
1 MS	Inadequate management of health and safety of staff leading to an incident. ***	<p>Management of health and safety is furthered with health and safety trained staff; 1 officer has Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH) and 1 with National Examination Board in Occupational Safety and Health (NEBOSH).</p> <p>There is a health and safety policy in place which is periodically reviewed as well as risk assessments for all NIFCA work activities. Within the policy the Authority is committed to the safety of its staff and carefully manages lone working of its employees which is kept to a minimum.</p> <p>There are also policies in place regarding use of Authority's vehicles and vessels, accident and incident reporting, mobile phone use, bodycam use, manual handling, display screen assessments, and noise and vibration.</p> <p>All new staff/student placements undergo a health and safety induction. Additional mandatory STCW safety training is given to all IFCOs with further PPE and safety training depending on job role covering: navigation, vessel stability, and vibration on fast patrol craft, RYA vessel training, 4x4 training, manual handling, defibrillator use.</p> <p>Training records of safety drills and procedures are kept updated on both the Authority patrol vessels, vessel safety training is carried out periodically with all crew.</p> <p>The security of the office building is by a locked gated car park with keypad access to the main building. The car park entrance and carpark is covered by security cameras which permanently record video.</p> <p>The office has a fire risk assessment which is reviewed annually. There is a visitor book which records all the people on site at any one time.</p>	1	3	7	<p>Monthly-checks take place and there is a periodic fire drill for all officers and staff.</p> <p>Records of regular testing and inspection also take place.</p> <p>There is a quarterly Health & Safety Report to the Authority and the position is minuted. Chief Officer meeting quarterly with lead Environment and Enforcement and report to Authority quarterly meetings.</p> <p>All IFCOs and Office staff undertake occupational health tests. IFCOs to complete Annual Occupational Health Test, office staff every other year. There is now one member of staff trained in Mental Health First Aid.</p> <p>ML5 certificates for all sea going duties.</p> <p>All officers have to periodically refresh all safety training.</p>	Chief Officer M. Southerton (MS) LEIFCO N. Weir to enforcement team LEIFCO to environment team	<p>Health and safety training for Lead Environmental Officer.</p> <p>NW looking into IOSH refresher courses.</p> <p>To continue with all relevant training.</p>	Sept 2023	March 2024

Ref for review	Risk	Controls	L	I	S	Monitoring Process	Responsibility	Further Action Required	Date of Last Review	Date of Next Review
2a MS	An aggrieved member of the public becomes abusive leading to an incident in the field. ***	As above plus: building up relationships, using negotiating and influencing skills. A complaints book is also in place for anyone wishing to make a complaint about any incidents. Enforcement officers equipped with personal protective clothing and equipment. Vast majority of time work in pairs. Lone working risk assessed and policy and procedures in place. Officers have body cameras and vehicle cameras which are used to record video/audio when out on patrol and may be used to gather evidence of incidents. On the rare occasion that lone working is required, the Officer will text or ring in at the beginning and end of the day to notify the Chief Officer or designated duty officer/member of staff that they have started or finished. Conflict resolution training has also been given to IFCOs. Access to intelligence to flag up markers on individuals.	2	4	12	Reporting to Chief Officer and Lead IFCOs and meeting of the Authority. Near misses as well as accidents & incidents are recorded.	Chief Officer		October 2023	March 2024
2b ES/ NW	An aggrieved member of the public becomes abusive leading to an incident – with an office-based member of staff and general office security. ***	As risk 1 and 2a above plus: building up relationships, using negotiating and influencing skills. The Authority's premises at 8 Ennerdale Road also have CCTV and electronic access providing extra security and the above mentioned visitors' book also keeps a record of who has been at the office in case of any difficulty. It is general practice to ensure a minimum of 2 members of staff to be in the office at any time where practicably required and in most cases, the gate should be locked when only one person is in the building.	1	2	3	Reporting to Chief Officer and the Committee.	Chief Officer.	Keep under review the front door closing function (MS). Review CCTV coverage for whole building including front desk and/or front door – to be included in building refurb.	October 2023	March 2024
2c ES	Unauthorised access to the building via unlocked door/ finding lost keys resulting in unattended visitors or theft of assets. ***	Self-closing door with entry code on the front entrance of the building. Doors are kept locked in the garage unless an Officer(s) is using the room. The building alarm is connected to ADT, if activated ADT will make contact with the designated Officers.	1	2	3	Reporting to Chief Officer and the Committee.	Chief Officer		October 2023	March 2024

Ref for review	Risk	Controls	L	I	S	Monitoring Process	Responsibility	Further Action Required	Date of Last Review	Date of Next Review
3 MS JS	Accusation of an officer or staff member of dishonesty or fraud leading to loss of reputation of the Authority	Authority governance including Codes of Conduct in place and all employees have had to complete a declaration of interests form. Financial Regulations and Procedures handbook, including system requiring Officer and Chief Officer approval before any payments are made and an order approval process requiring quotes. Receipts issued for all donations; register kept for transparency. Disciplinary process. Installation of online banking has increased security. A fireproof office safe is also securely installed, access to which is controlled and limited. The Chief Officer and Authority Chair also both have Authority Barclaycards, all usage is checked by Chief Officer and the Finance Officer, and all expenditure is memo'd and all expenditure is reported as soon as possible to the Authority Finance Officer. Card reader now installed which also increases financial security. Sage 50 has been installed and that will continue to improve accuracy and reduce risk of errors in financial management. A policy for the card reader has been written, by those who use it. Enforcement officers have BPSS security clearance. A. Aitken N. Weir have been added as bank signatories.	1	3	7	Ongoing monitoring by Chief Officer and Finance Officer. Annual Internal Audit. Admin Officer and Chief Officer added as signatory.	Chief Officer/ JS	Keep situation under ongoing review.	October 2023	March 2024
4 MS/ JS	Inadequate funding leading to overspending or reduced level of service	The Authority precepts upon Northumberland County Council (83.37%) and North Tyneside Metropolitan Borough Council (16.63%). The Authority membership includes Councillors with these authorities. Should funding be reduced, the Authority would seek to cut back in certain areas and renegotiate upon the level of service provided. Contingency planning between Chief Officer, Finance Officer and Chair has been previously undertaken in that regard and reported to the Authority. Tight financial controls. Financial Regulations are implemented. Budget reporting by Finance Officer to Chief Officer as well as meeting at least once a week between Finance Officer and Chief Officer. Under the Marine and Coastal Access Act, throughout the life of IFCAs, additional funding has been awarded by DEFRA for New Burdens which is confirmed to continue until the end of 2024-25. Base costs and overheads have increased but rigorous planning of the budget continues and there is compliance with Audit recommendations. In addition, the Authority's patrol vessels St. Aidan and RIB Robert Arckless & TT St	2	3	10	Finance Officer reporting to Chief Officer, and to the Quarterly Meeting of the Authority. Chief Officer is part of the MAFCO group (comprising Chief Officers from all the IFCAs and Defra) that has been (amongst other things) reviewing the position regarding the continuation of New Burdens Funding.	Finance Officer reporting to Chief Officer and Finance Committee	Continuing to work with NCC to strengthen procedures under the Audit Action Plan. Keep level of budget spend and possibility of budget increases or further incremental increases under ongoing review. Keep under review the position regarding New Burdens Funding and RDEL funding from Defra.	October 2023	March 2024

Ref for review	Risk	Controls	L	I	S	Monitoring Process	Responsibility	Further Action Required	Date of Last Review	Date of Next Review
		<p>Aidan brings increased efficiency and savings in terms of running costs and maintenance as well as increasing chartering opportunities and thereby income because of increased capability.</p> <p>Periodic budget increases, as have occurred over the last few years, mitigate the risk of overspend or reduced level of service.</p> <p>RDEL funding to support new national policy for the SR21 spend period. Capital delivery opportunities to fund future marine assets.</p>								
5 MS	<p>Loss of staff (e.g. through long term sickness, pandemic or turnover) leading to a loss of skills, knowledge and experience and reduced capacity to deliver the service. Impact assessed based upon losing 2 staff.</p> <p>***</p>	<p>Workload would be distributed between remaining staff. Recruitment of additional resource e.g. part-time/temporary staff. Notice period required is between 6 weeks and 3 months for IFCOs and office staff. Training of existing staff to do tasks of others. Training of new recruits. Financial Regulations developed for finance. There would be liaison with other Authorities to get staff from them on a temporary or permanent basis. Reconfiguration of Authority operation would take place if funding reduced, including working from home. The Authority has its complement of IFCOs and Admin support at a good level.</p> <p>Additional IFCO recruitment has brought in additional skillsets to cover more roles in the event of sickness absence or turnover. Designated skipper now in role with additional IFCOs now able to support periods of absence. Maintenance support now being developed with T. Nash. Additional banking/payroll support is being phased in. Additional staff covering Marine licensing.</p>	2	2	6	<p>Lead Enforcement IFCO leads rota meetings with other IFCOs. Close working with Chief Officer, Finance Officer and Admin staff.</p> <p>Regarding monitoring process, a "Certificate of Fitness" and return to work interview upon an IFCO or staff member returning to work after a period of absence will be sought if necessary and appropriate to ensure fitness to return to work.</p> <p>Annual Occupational Health checks put in place for all Officers and checks every 2 years for office staff.</p> <p>Contact maintained, by video conferencing in particular, in pandemic.</p>	Chief Officer.	<p>Keep under review business continuity planning for significant loss of staff during such as a pandemic/flu outbreak and recruitment/turnover.</p> <p>Continued review of Crisis Management Plan related to staff.</p> <p>Regular meetings of the whole staff to be increased to quarterly.</p>	October 2023	March 2024
6a NW	<p>Loss of boat, RIBs, vehicles, plant and equipment leading to inability to enforce byelaws</p>	<p>The Authority employs a qualified engineer; if engineer absent for any length of time T. Nash could cover the situation for a reasonable period. PV and RIB insurance in place - replacement policy in the event of fire or sinking, duplicate documents are held on land or replacements can be obtained. PC back-up procedures in place and backup</p>	1	2	3	<p>Reporting to Patrol Vessel Subcommittee if applicable, Watch Committee, RIB Procurement Subcommittee and main committee meetings of the Authority.</p>	Chief Officer/ Lead Enforcement IFCO	<p>Approval of a third vehicle for operational use</p>	October 2023	March 2024

Ref for review	Risk	Controls	L	I	S	Monitoring Process	Responsibility	Further Action Required	Date of Last Review	Date of Next Review
	and deliver service.	<p>for data on PV at office. Mutual assistance could be sought through e.g. North Eastern IFCA and other organisations. Lead-in time for replacement new RIB is 2-3 months for hire, (but procurement and build likely to take years). Leasing during interim period best option. The Authority's existing RIB capability also means there is a supplementary vessel if the patrol boat is out of action. Engineering service training been undertaken by an additional IFCO.</p> <p>TT St Aidan has been coded and a trailer has been purchased giving NIFCA additional sea going ability.</p> <p>NIFCA 4x4 vehicle policy is now active.</p> <p>Maintenance system in place for all vessels and vehicles.</p>								
6b MS ES	Loss of building e.g. through fire leading to inability to deliver service.	<p>IT back-up provided by One IT and website back-up by Urban River. Temporary accommodation would be sought initially from NCC. Current files are held in steel cabinets. Have a fireproof safe for the most important documents and a small safe for any cash which has to be held on the premises plus keys and other small but important items.</p> <p>Deeds held in strong cupboard. Other records held on the boat or electronically.</p> <p>Insurance.</p> <p>Fire awareness for staff is built into the Authority Health & Safety Policy and planning.</p> <p>Ensure the continued safe and secure disposal of surplus files and paper held by the Authority.</p> <p>NIFCA have now got the capability for all staff to work from home as well as the office so in the event of a fire, working could continue as normal.</p>	1	2	3	<p>Reporting to Chief Officer.</p> <p>Fire risk assessment reviewed annually.</p>	Admin Officer	<p>One IT Support replaced NCC in Jan 2018 - keep this arrangement under review.</p> <p>Continue to dispose of safely, and in an environmentally friendly way, any old paperwork, where no longer required.</p> <p>Keep under review NCC ability to provide accommodation if required or possible accommodation share with another partner agency.</p>	March 2023	March 2024

Ref for review	Risk	Controls	L	I	S	Monitoring Process	Responsibility	Further Action Required	Date of Last Review	Date of Next Review
7 MS	Failure to regulate in accordance with legislation.	<p>Professional update will be maintained through membership of the Association of IFCA's, attendance at Chief Officer Group meetings, MAFCO and networking through other IFCA's, regular updates from Parliament, DEFRA and SAGB communications. Chief Officer analysis with advice particularly from Lead Enforcement and Environmental IFCO's with their updates from NIMEG and TAG. Admin staff scanning the internet on a regular basis. Internal communication framework.</p> <p>The Authority will also continue to regulate as may be required under the European Marine Site Revised Approach to Fisheries Management and MPAs generally. Full consultation including with the MMO is undertaken and also with Natural England, particularly re Habitats Regulations and other stakeholders. Close/joint working with the MMO and with Defra re future fisheries management (Fisheries Act 2020 and Joint Fisheries Statement) and FMPs. The Authority has access and receives legal advice from Andrew Jackson solicitors.</p>	2	3	10	<p>Rota meetings. Close working with Admin staff. Staff meetings on Microsoft Teams. Quarterly reporting to Committee of the Authority.</p> <p>Senior IFCO's of the Authority now attend the MMO's TCG meetings and TAG meetings and NIMEG.</p> <p>AIFCA, COG and MAFCO meetings attended by Chief or Lead Officers.</p>	Chief Officer reporting to the Watch Committee	<p>Byelaws continue to be kept under review.</p> <p>The Authority continues to act on the requirement to complete MPA Assessments (HRAs and MCZ in line with the current deadline of 2024 Assessments) for all feature/fishery interactions. Following the conclusions of these assessments the Authority will identify appropriate regulation if required.</p> <p>To continue the implementation and development of monitoring and control plans.</p> <p>Keep potential and actual consequences of Brexit under review and regarding the Fisheries Act.</p>	October 2023	March 2024
8 MS	DEFRA or MMO objects to proposed new byelaw leading to management difficulties experienced by the Authority.	In developing byelaw proposals, legal expertise is sought where necessary and reference is also made to the Defra Guidance to IFCA's on making byelaws. There is also ongoing liaison with the MMO and a good relationship is maintained. The enhanced IFCA byelaw-making process including specific provision for consultation and Impact Assessments should reduce the risk of Defra or MMO objection to a proposed new byelaw. Also working closely with other IFCA's and Association regarding National (Boilerplate) Byelaws where these may be required.	1	3	7	All relevant staff and the Authority.	Chief Officer/ Lead Officers	<p>All byelaws are kept under ongoing review.</p> <p>Reviewing fixed engine byelaw).</p> <p>Keep under review MMO direction re. byelaw duplication.</p>	October 2023	March 2024

Ref for review	Risk	Controls	L	I	S	Monitoring Process	Responsibility	Further Action Required	Date of Last Review	Date of Next Review
9 MS	Failure to adequately manage the continuation of the Northumberland IFCA and all duties under the implementation of the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009.	<p>IFCA duties and remit including the continuation of the Authority and its duties under the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 are fulfilled by the Authority on an ongoing basis.</p> <p>MOUs with partner agencies are followed and in particular the Authority has implemented and worked with partner agencies locally upon a Joint Working Arrangement (JWA). This has ensured compliance with the provisions of the Marine & Coastal Access Act 2009 as these affect IFCAs. The IFCA followed the original High Level Objectives, Outcomes and Performance Indicators (and continue to do so for revised Success Criteria) and that has been done as much as possible and satisfactorily bearing in mind resource limitations and extra responsibilities which have been given to IFCAs. As well as guidance to IFCAs from Defra, the IFCA has also established its Annual Plan and Annual Report which are followed in managing its role plus Annual Research Plan & Report and Environmental and Compliance Enforcement Risk Matrices.</p> <p>Following review of "Employment Contracts, Performance Review and Reward (ECPR&R)" the Authority has fully implemented a staff Grading Structure which is kept under review.</p> <p>Four yearly national IFCA Conduct and Operations Review.</p>	1	3	7	This is built into the High-Level Objectives for the IFCA in the Annual Plan and as confirmed in the revised Success Criteria. Progress and attainment of objectives should be monitored continuously and reported upon quarterly to the meeting of the Authority and in the Authority Annual Report.	Chief Officer	<p>Adhere to monitoring process as detailed for this risk and maintain all necessary training for Officers and Staff and act upon guidance from the membership and Defra and Association of IFCAs.</p> <p>Monitor any outputs from the Evaluation and JWA.</p>	October 2023	March 2024
10 MS ES	Inadequate or inappropriate governance leading to inappropriate decision-making and loss of reputation.	<p>Members are appointed by NCC, NTC, MMO and 3 statutory members. Also reference to Authority Constitution, Standing Orders and Members' Code of Conduct. Guidance is also given to IFCOs who have a code of conduct and other staff as appropriate as to what should be done to avoid inappropriate decisions and loss of reputation. NIFCA have procedures to deal with misconduct of members and employees. Declarations of Interest are also completed by all Members and Staff. Control is also maintained by transparency of operation and an appropriate chain of command to ensure the correct approval for actions is obtained where required. Introduced and distributed a Staff handbook and Member handbook, both of which are living documents.</p> <p>All new Members appointed to NIFCA receive the New</p>	1	3	7	<p>Annual Audit. Quarterly Authority meetings and Extraordinary General/Emergency meetings if required. IFCOs report to Lead Enforcement IFCO (and Chief Officer when required). A secure system of emailing and data storage is also maintained by the Authority with all personnel having personal NIFCA email addresses.</p> <p>KPIs are used to guide staff appraisals which contribute to enhanced working and feeds into governance decisions.</p> <p>Policies re pandemic have been</p>	Authority Chair and Chief Officer.	Governance documents, policies, staff and Member handbooks to be kept under review.	October 2023	March 2024

Ref for review	Risk	Controls	L	I	S	Monitoring Process	Responsibility	Further Action Required	Date of Last Review	Date of Next Review
		Members Information Pack and the provision of training. Chief Officer and Chair undertook a review of Standing Orders and general governance, which was approved by the Authority membership and resultant changes implemented in 2018 and further review and updating took place in 2021.				implemented and how it affects the work of NIFCA.				
11 ES	Failure to keep policies and training up to date, leading to mishandling of information and complaint from employee or applicant.	Regularly reviewed primarily by Admin Officer in liaison with the Chief Officer. Regular attendance at online Employment Law updates to keep abreast of changing legislation and industry practice and implement changes where necessary. Regular review of relevant training needs by line managers and referral where appropriate. Additional GDPR training has been put in place for staff.	2	3	10	Regular liaison by Admin Officer with the Chief Officer. Keep under review the need for implementation of new policies and/or training.	Admin Officer/ Chief Officer	Ongoing as stated under controls and monitoring process. To review recruitment procedure to ensure equality and diversity is at the forefront of procedure including regarding making necessary adaptations to interview/assessments.	October 2023	March 2024
12 JS	Inadequate budgetary control leading to overspending. Or inability to access online banking.	Financial skills, qualifications and experience of finance officer and use of financial regulations. Members' scrutiny of financial reports provide a quarterly challenge. Monthly (or more frequently if required) budget meetings between Finance Officer and Chief Officer. Contingency within annual budget. The Authority budget is prepared in detail with member input, with quarterly forecasts and detailed breakdowns of all heads of expenditure within the quarterly and annual accounts which are prepared by the Finance Officer working with the Chief Officer to keep spending within budget. Preparation for annual audit begins in the third quarter with the Audit Section at Northumberland County Council before the Audit itself the following spring/early summer. The Authority also has reserves to cover any major contingencies which may arise. If JS sick could seek support from NCC or from a bookkeeping "temping" agency. N.W undertaking Payroll training.	1	2	3	Annual audit and quarterly meetings plus regular liaison between Finance Officer and Chief Officer plus regular liaison with internal audit and members where necessary and Chief Officer where appropriate.	Finance Officer	Finance Officer will continue to meet the Chief Officer and other colleagues as applicable to plan for audit and budget controls and consult the Northumberland County Council Internal Audit Team.	October 2023	March 2024

Ref for review	Risk	Controls	L	I	S	Monitoring Process	Responsibility	Further Action Required	Date of Last Review	Date of Next Review
		NW and AA added as a signatory to allow backup checks of expenditure if Chief Officer absent for any length of time.								
13 MS/ Env. team	Fisheries in the District impacted by the activities of developers/non-fishing industry. Insufficient time to fully consider environmental impact assessments for inshore development.	<p>NIFCA acts as a statutory consultee to the Marine Licence process where any plan or project in the marine area requires a licence. Consultations responded to by the Authority after due consideration particularly by the Environmental team. There is a dedicated officer who reviews marine licence applications. They summarise the application and send it to the environmental team and Chief Officer for agreement on the response and to NIFCA members on a case-by-case basis.</p> <p>Marine Licences are also consulted on by other organisations (eg Environment Agency and Natural England). This process can include liaison with other consulting agencies where necessary. The process can include meetings with applicants and the MMO where necessary. The Authority has an Environmental Risk Register for the District which is kept under review. IFCOs sit on the Local Standing Environmental Group.</p> <p>Following the recent shellfish mortality wash up around the Tees, Officers have developed an actions, reporting and comms strategy if a similar event occurs locally.</p>	1	3	7	Review takes place of notices received of proposed developments and there is a set process for response to consultation, Chief Officer liaising with Environmental Officers and with Authority members where applicable and reporting to the Quarterly Meeting of the Authority. Also obtaining further information where applicable from the developer and other agencies such as MMO. There is an IFCA-MMO Liaison meeting to maintain communications about developments/marine licence applications and regular meetings between key partners (NE and EA) on local marine licence applications.	Chief Officer and Lead Environmental Officer		October 2023	March 2024
14 MS	Failure to fully engage with stakeholders	<p>The officers meet regularly with fishers in the district particularly when on patrol. Meetings will also continue with fishers, recreational sea anglers and other stakeholders in the district. Information is received through the membership and from stakeholders on any areas of concern which there may be and will be acted on as appropriate. The website continues to be improved to increase outreach.</p> <p>Subcommittees will consider specific issues. Regular liaison with GLA, MMO, EA and NE including through the local Joint Working Arrangement (JWA). There is also regular liaison with Newcastle University School of Marine Science and the Tweed Commission. Regular press releases and other appropriate liaison with the media. The Authority has a dedicated officer dealing with Social Media platforms such</p>	1	3	7	<p>By meetings and other means of communication and reporting to members and assistance of PR Adviser.</p> <p>Continually updating and distributing NIFCA information and publicity.</p>	Chief Officer	Continue to keep the whole of stakeholder engagement under continuous review and update where necessary including through website, social media, posters in the district and information leaflets to stakeholders.	October 2023	March 2024

Ref for review	Risk	Controls	L	I	S	Monitoring Process	Responsibility	Further Action Required	Date of Last Review	Date of Next Review
		as Facebook and Twitter which increases the ability to have regular contact with stakeholders, members and the public as well as maintaining a very proactive website and attending public events in person or virtually. The Authority has now introduced a new online consultation process to facilitate better engagement. A fully comprehensive stakeholder list is also in place together with the Authority Promotion and Communications Plan upon which there is assistance from Amy Maughan PR & Communications. The Authority also now produces a periodic newsletter and fisher focus newsletters, plus information sheets where required e.g. for the EMS Revised Approach and has also put up notices in the district and produced minimum size cards and foreign language transcription for posters. The Authority introduced Fishers Forums with commercial fishers and continue engagement with recreational fishers with the enhancement of our RSA Strategy and all of this is ongoing.								
15 MS/ Env. team	Degradation of environmentally sensitive areas due to fishing activity.	<p>NIFCA Byelaws NIFCA has a suite of byelaws which aims to conserve exploited stocks and associated habitat. These byelaws allow NIFCA to put measures on fisheries which interact with habitats, including sensitive areas. Byelaws are reviewed periodically to ensure sufficient stock and habitat remains protected. The Authority also has the power to make emergency byelaws if an unforeseen risk to sensitive areas arises.</p> <p>NIFCA MPA Assessments - NIFCA has engaged fully with the Defra Revised Approach to Management of fisheries in European Marine Sites and has carried out assessments for most feature fishery interactions. All red risk interactions have been addressed by management measures above.</p> <p>NIFCA Monitoring and Control Plans - These plans are reviewed annually and ensure that all activity interacting with sensitive areas is below threshold levels. If a threshold is breached, assessments will be carried out which could lead to management measures. Data feeding into these include: sightings data from routine patrols, landings data, information from Monitor and Control Surveillance System (MCSS), the Automatic Information System (AIS) and the Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) including geo-fencing of</p>	1	4	11	<p>Reports to the Chief Officer. Quarterly reports by IFCOs to Authority meetings. A weekly Environmental Team meeting has been introduced as well as monthly catch up meetings with the Chief Officer and TCG meetings both at the MMO and internally.</p> <p>Research work is ongoing to address risk and monitor impacts. See Annual Research Plan</p>	Chief Officer & Environmental Team	Continue with research and monitoring programme.	October 2023	March 2024

Ref for review	Risk	Controls	L	I	S	Monitoring Process	Responsibility	Further Action Required	Date of Last Review	Date of Next Review
		<p>specific areas.</p> <p>Environmental Risk Register - This details potential risks to sensitive areas and highlights where monitoring should be prioritised. This is written in conjunction with the Compliance and Enforcement Strategy to ensure targeted enforcement in sensitive areas.</p> <p>Annual Research Plan - All of the above is fed into an Annual Research Plan which directs the research work of the Environmental Team to fill knowledge gaps or continue monitoring fishing activity. Some areas of work are carried out with Newcastle University and Natural England.</p> <p>All of this work is supported by Natural England and other members.</p>								
16 MS/ AA	Stocks collapse	<p>There is an Environmental Risk Register in place which takes this risk into account. This links to Fisheries Management Plans which aims to ensure sustainable fishing. NIFCA have a suite of byelaws which are effectively enforced by a dedicated team.</p> <p>For the purpose of this matrix controls have been split by fishery.</p> <p>Potting: NIFCA byelaws are in place operating a permit scheme for commercial and recreational fishers, plus a pot limitation and daily bag limits for non-commercial fishers. Recreational fishers must have pots fitted with an escape gap. Byelaw and national legislation in place for conservation of Crustacea includes prohibition on taking berried females, other measures include not landing parts of animals or not landing soft animals.</p> <p>There is a minimum landing size for commercially important species including lobster, brown crab, velvet crab and nephrops. Permit holders have been issued with a gauge to measure this easily.</p> <p>NIFCA internal lobster and brown crab stock assessments will continue and CEFAS crab and lobster assessments are also taken into account.</p>	1	4	11	<p>Reports to the Chief Officer. Quarterly reports by officers to Authority meetings. Technical and Scientific meetings. Environmental meetings between Authority officers and regular meetings with Natural England and other agencies.</p> <p>National meetings attended for updates.</p> <p>Fisheries Management Plans MPA Assessments Monitoring and Control Plans</p>	Chief Officer, and Lead IFCOs	<p>Keep under review level of enforcement and overview in respect of all stocks and keep including possibility of crustacean stocks collapse ref. NEIFCA District.</p> <p>Update Fisheries Management Plans and Monitoring and Control Plans.</p> <p>Carry out research detailed in Annual Research Plan.</p> <p>Keep under review the system of permit returns and data collection and number of active fishers.</p>	October 2023	March 2024

Ref for review	Risk	Controls	L	I	S	Monitoring Process	Responsibility	Further Action Required	Date of Last Review	Date of Next Review
		<p>Permits require monthly returns to be submitted to NIFCA and landings are closely monitored and feed into Fisheries Management Plans which combine all evidence and knowledge on the fishery.</p> <p>Trawling: NIFCA byelaws state you must have a permit to trawl within the whole district. Gear restrictions in place. Permits require monthly returns to be submitted to NIFCA and landings are closely monitored. Main target species is a quota species and managed by MMO. There are spatial prohibitions and restrictions in place for this activity.</p> <p>Dredging: Scallop dredging is prohibited in the NIFCA district.</p> <p>Hand Gathering: Routine monitoring of activity throughout the district. Code of conduct developed to aim to reduce pressure on smaller periwinkle.</p>								
17 ES	Breakdown in relations with stakeholders and other agencies including Marine Management Organisation, Environment Agency, Natural England and other IFCA's.	<p>MoUs and regular liaison with all partner organisations and stakeholders including surveys of views and properly responding to any queries or complaints and reporting as appropriate to membership. In addition Joint Working arrangements locally with MMO, EA and NE. In addition the Authority has MoUs with the Tweed Commission, and Newcastle University. Also the Authority's compliments, comments and complaints system is kept under review. Complaints are felt to continue to be at the lowest possible level. Chief & Lead IFCOs attend MMOs TCG Meetings and MMO attend NIFCA TCG Meetings. NIFCA attendance at TAG and NIMEG. Four yearly conduct and operations review takes place allowing partner agencies to comment on IFCA's.</p> <p>The Authority works with AIFCA on a national level. The Authority also interacts with partner organisations and stakeholders appropriately on social media and at meetings in the district and responds in a timely fashion to queries/ comments raised online and in the public arena. Consultation</p>	1	2	3	<p>Stakeholders and other agencies can contact the Authority office and also attend NIFCA public meetings. A record is kept of any complaints or other comments requiring action and the Authority office in particular will remain proactive to foresee as much as possible likely areas which need to be dealt with to prevent any breakdown in relations. The Authority continues to engage with all stakeholders.</p> <p>Currently undergoing national IFCA Conduct and Operations Report.</p>	Chief Officer		October 2023	March 2024

Ref for review	Risk	Controls	L	I	S	Monitoring Process	Responsibility	Further Action Required	Date of Last Review	Date of Next Review
		process allows best possible response together with use of the NIFCA website and publicity via social media.								
18 Env team	Failure to properly fulfil responsibility including role in respect of European Marine Site, Marine Conservation Zones,	<p>Close liaison with Defra and other IFCAs including in respect of MPAs, Technical Advisory Group, Chief Officers Group and Association of IFCAs ensures knowledge and awareness is maintained.</p> <p>Strong communication between officers particularly Environmental IFCOs and Chief Officer and with Authority members.</p> <p>Regular meetings and communication between the Environmental team and Natural England. Regular meetings with the Northumberland Marine Nature Partnership. Maintain relationship with the University for project work. Full liaison with Natural England and the Marine Management Organisation nationally.</p> <p>Regular monitoring of MPAs including SPAs, SACs and MCZs in the district. Continue work for EMS Revised Approach to Fisheries Management to complete all MPA assessments and update M and C plans. Maintain awareness of evolution of work in MPAs. MCZ management measures have been implemented.</p>	1	3	7	<p>Regular discussions between the Authority Environmental Team and Chief Officer and also particularly with Natural England/Authority member and MNP Implementation Officer and reporting upon meetings to the Authority.</p> <p>Also quarterly reporting on EMS revised approach by Environmental IFCOs.</p> <p>Regular Technical and Scientific meetings of officers and members.</p>	Chief Officer & Environmental team	<p>Continue to keep under review the outputs from stakeholder meetings and online consultations.</p> <p>Continue with all necessary survey work and monitoring of fishing activity in the district.</p> <p>Maintain awareness of how assessments in MPAs are progressing and the deadline for management by 2024. .</p>	October 2023	March 2024
19 JS ES	Information technology failure leading to loss of data and affecting the Authority's ability to function.	Service Level Agreement with One IT who provide back up for data and internet security and telephone system. Paper records of documents are also kept securely and can be referred to as well as what can be accessed through computers. New hard drives/multiple locations. Replacing computers is ongoing since 2018 and a replacement programme in place to replace all old PCs.	1	4	11	Through the SLA – this includes the services of an IT Manager for the Authority with One IT Support. It is also monitored every working day by Officers and staff.	Admin Officer and Finance Officer	Finance/ Admin Officer to keep up SLA with One IT Support to ensure it is working efficiently and receiving an adequate level of support. Continue to review and replace old IT equipment.	March 2023	March 2024

Ref for review	Risk	Controls	L	I	S	Monitoring Process	Responsibility	Further Action Required	Date of Last Review	Date of Next Review
20 ES	Insufficient members attending an authority meeting preventing time limited or other urgent business eg. Regarding audits being approved. ***	<p>Giving members sufficient notice of meetings. Trying to agree in advance of the meeting with as many members as possible that they can attend. At least one Councillor and one MMO appointed member must attend each official IFCA meeting. Changed day of the week of quarterly meetings and start time to that most suitable for Councillors. Hold meetings at County Hall and NTC and other suitable venues as well and members able to dial-in to meetings, where applicable. Members to give reasons for non-attendance for approval by meeting.</p> <p>Changed running order of Finance and Watch meetings to make more suitable for members on each committee.</p> <p>Sending out calendar invitations to members to ensure clear communication re. meeting dates and to allow easy reference to planned member attendance.</p>	1	4	11	CO liaises through Admin Officer with key members particularly Chair/ Vice Chair in advance of meetings.	Chief Officer		October 2023	March 2024
21 MS	Intelligence not being securely processed and shared/ disseminated.	<p>MMO provided intel system and Authority has trained, prepared and experienced Intel Officers.</p> <p>Continual assistance from MMO Intel Team and MMO Ops Room.</p> <p>Data Sharing Agreement with the Police including regulated access to PNC. Standard practice for security clearance of all new employees.</p> <p>All IFCOs have attended OSINT training.</p> <p>Officers have received extra training with MCSS from the MMO and resources have been made available for all staff.</p> <p>All enforcement IFCOs have BPSS security checks.</p>	1	4	11	Intel Officers liaise with Chief Officer, monthly TCG and can seek guidance from the MMO.	Chief Officer	Any further training and guidance to be accessed by IFCOs and staff where necessary. Ongoing liaison with the MMO. Continue with training as necessary regarding Intel Project so IFCOs fully acquainted.	October 2023	March 2024
22 ES	Emails/Website being hacked or in some other way interfered with maliciously.	<p>Officers and staff to have strong and secure passwords for emails and website login (where applicable) to reduce the possibility of a manual hack. All NIFCA Officers and staff to be vigilant of any unusual activity on the email/website and to report immediately to the Chief Officer/Admin Officer.</p> <p>Have 2-stage authentication system for accessing NIFCA emails, reducing the chance of a hack.</p>	1	4	11	Daily checking of the website/ emails and liaison as appropriate with Urban River/One IT.	Chief Officer and Admin Officer	<p>Ongoing monitoring/ liaison with Urban River/One IT.</p> <p>Data security training for all new employees.</p>	October 2023	March 2024

Ref for review	Risk	Controls	L	I	S	Monitoring Process	Responsibility	Further Action Required	Date of Last Review	Date of Next Review
		Passwords changed/users removed and updated when there is a change of staff to ensure only present staff can login to the website to make changes. All staff have undergone online Data security training.								
23 ES	Risk of reputational damage to NIFCA via social media misuse by staff/ members/ public /stakeholders	Social media checked daily and any comments/likes/ mentions regarding NIFCA are reported to the Chief Officer/Admin Officer. The above are responded to appropriately and as quickly as possible. Social media policy introduced to reduce the number of users for Twitter/ Facebook and to keep the tone of any social media presence consistent. One IT now hosting NIFCA domain.	2	3	10	Daily checking of Twitter and Facebook by Officer (with back-up by admin team) and report to Chief Officer for response.	Admin Officer/ Chief Officer	Ongoing monitoring and posting to social media sites. Keep social media policy under review.	October 2023	March 2024
24 MS	Legislative changes including the Fisheries Act & Environment Act	Regular checking of all relevant media including "They Work for You" from Parliament, Fishing News and CMS. Also working closely with the Association of IFCA's and COG and reporting on all relevant matters to Authority Members and IFCO's/ Staff.	2	4	12	Regular checking and reporting to/review at Authority Technical and Scientific meetings.	Chief Officer	Ongoing as stated under controls and monitoring process. Keep under review progress of Joint Fisheries Statement and Fisheries Management Plans being developed by Defra. Remain aware of national review of EU law in context of fisheries and employment law.	October 2023	March 2024
25 ES	Breach of Data Protection Act and General Data Protection Regulation with possible financial and reputational impact to the Authority ***	The Authority has developed a suite of policies for GDPR and is now compliant. Assistance is offered by Northumberland County Council and legal help could also be sought if required. The Chief Officer will meet regularly on this subject with the Admin Officer (Authority DPO) and Finance Officer. All staff were briefed and trained prior to the inception of GDPR. Current contracts with external organisations updated to adhere to GDPR and data policy now on website. Now have secure bins for disposing of confidential paperwork, collected quarterly by professional shredding company. A Data Sharing Agreement between each IFCA and the MMO is now in place. IFCO Rick Willis will be the Data Sharing Officer for the	2	4	12	DPO and Chief Officer to keep up to date regarding GDPR and update staff where necessary.	Chief Officer, Admin Officer and Finance Officer.	To complete and keep up to date the Authority policies and training and reporting to members. To keep GDPR under review post Brexit and any amendments to UK legislation. Training to staff on Data Sharing Agreement.	October 2023	March 2024

Ref for review	Risk	Controls	L	I	S	Monitoring Process	Responsibility	Further Action Required	Date of Last Review	Date of Next Review
		Data Sharing Agreement NIFCA now has with the MMO. Staff are now regularly working from home and taking data (including on laptops) out of the office. Use of strong passwords and careful storage of data to minimise chance of a data breach. Data Sharing Agreement now in place with the Police. WFH policy now in place.						Keep working from home under review in respect of this risk.		
26 MS, ES	COVID	Existing COVID policies in place. Now have the facility to apply and pay for permits online reducing the need to come into the office. Ability to work remotely.	1	2	3	Policies kept under review by MS and ES. Covid testing capacity in house.			October 2023	March 2024
27 MS	Climate change and inshore fisheries plus Authority carbon footprint	NIFCA climate change policy in development. This lists areas where NIFCA can reduce energy consumption, carbon footprint, and waste. All staff/Officers have undertaken climate change training and we are now logging data for carbon footprint analysis. NIFCA are also reviewing how to incorporate climate change impacts into fisheries management and how climate change will impact the local fishing industry.	2	4	12	The Climate Change and Energy Use policy will be kept under review once developed. Metrics such as NIFCA's carbon footprint will be calculated and monitored. Temperature pot logger project to collect data.	Chief Officer	Continue policy development and review.	October 2023	March 2024
28 MS ES	New Management Structure	New management structure has been in place since 1/1/23. With any change in management comes risk as the new structure will develop new ways of working and guiding the governance of the Authority whilst meeting required KPIs.	2	4	12	Regular meetings/ liaison with Chief Officer reporting to Chair and members.	Chief Officer	Arrange annual review with SMT November.	October 2023	March 2024

DETAILS OF GUIDANCE FOR QUANTIFICATION OF RISKS AND THE SCORING GRID CAN BE SEEN IN THE ANNUAL PLAN AND IS AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST FROM AUTHORITY OFFICE.

GLOSSARY OF RELEVANT TERMS USED IN THIS ANNUAL PLAN, OF INTEREST AND/OR OF RELEVANCE TO NIFCA REMIT

ABBREVIATIONS

AIFCA	Association of IFCAs
AIS	Automatic Identification System
AONB	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
BNNC SAC	Berwickshire and North Northumberland Coast SAC
CaBA	Catchment Based Approach
CEFAS	The Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science
CFP	Common Fisheries Policy
CIFCO	Chief IFCO
COG	Chief Officers Group
CPUE	Catch per Unit Effort
DEFRA	Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs
EA	Environment Agency
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EMFF	European Maritime and Fisheries Fund
EMS	European Marine Site
EUNIS	European Nature Information System
FMP	Fisheries Management Plan
GIS	Geographic Information System
GLAA	Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority
GPS	Global Positioning System
HPMA	Highly Protected Marine Area
ICES	International Council for the Exploration of the Sea
IFCA	Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority
IFCO	Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Officer
iVMS	Inshore Vessel Monitoring System
JFS	Joint Fisheries Statement
JNCC	Joint Nature Conservation Committee
JWA	Joint Working Arrangement (in the district with the MMO, EA and NE)
KPI	Key Performance Indicators
LPUE	Landing per Unit Effort
MCA	Maritime Coastguard Agency
MaCAA	Marine & Coastal Access Act 2009
MCRS	Minimum Conservation Reference Size
MCSS	Monitor and Control Surveillance System
MCZ	Marine Conservation Zone
MEO	Marine Enforcement Officer
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MLS	Minimum Landing Size
MMO	Marine Management Organisation
MNCEA	Marine Natural Capital and Ecosystem Assessment
MPA	Marine Protected Area
MSC	Marine Stewardship Council
MSFD	Marine Strategy Framework Directive
MSY	Maximum Sustainable Yield
NCC	Northumberland County Council
NE	Natural England
NeBBS	North East Beached Bird Survey
NEBOSH	National Examination Board in Occupational Safety and Health
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
NIMEG	National Inshore Marine Enforcement Group
NIFCA	Northumberland Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority
nm	Nautical Miles
NNR	National Nature Reserve
NSFC	Northumberland Sea Fisheries Committee
NTL	Normal Tidal Limit
NTC	North Tyneside Council
OSINT	Open Source Intelligence
PACE	Police and Criminal Evidence Act

PPR	Professional Practices and Responsibilities
RIB	Rigid Inflatable Boat
RNLI	Royal National Lifeboat Institution
RSA	Recreational Sea Angling
SAGB	Shellfish Association of Great Britain
SAC	Special Areas of Conservation
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment
SOLAS	The International Convention for the Safety of Life At Sea
SPA	Special Protection Areas
SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest
STCW	Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping
RYA	Royal Yacht Association
TAC	Total Allowable Catch
TAG	Technical Advisory Group
TCG	Tactical and Co-ordination Group
UNCLOS	United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea
VMS	Vessel Monitoring System

GLOSSARY: POLICY AND LEGISLATION

Byelaw	A regulation made by a local authority.
Common Fisheries Policy (CFP)	Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) is the fisheries policy of the European Union (EU). It sets quotas which indicate how much of each fish species each member state is allowed to catch, as well as encouraging the fishing industry by various market interventions. The implications of the CFP to UK fisheries have changed post Brexit.
Habitats and Species Regulations	Transposes the Birds Directive and Habitats Directive into UK law. Aims to protect the habitats and species listed in the Directive's Annexes. Aims to protect all European wild birds and the habitats of the species listed in the directive
Marine and Coastal Access Act (MaCAA)	Seeks to improve management and increase protection for the marine environment within English inshore areas. The Act includes provisions for the establishment of the MMO, IFCA's and the creation of a network of MCZs.
Fisheries Act (2020)	The Act gives the UK full control of its fishing waters, listing eight fisheries objectives and creating the requirement for the fisheries policy authorities to produce a Joint Fisheries Statement
Joint Fisheries Statement	The JFS enables the UK fisheries policy authorities (Defra, and the devolved administrations in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales) to develop fisheries management plans (FMPs) to help deliver ambitions for sustainable fisheries.
Fisheries Management Plans (FMPs)	FMPs will be evidence-based action plans, developed in collaboration with the fishing sector and other stakeholders. Their purpose is to deliver sustainable fisheries for current and future generations.
NIFCA Byelaws	A set of regulations enforced by NIFCA within the NIFCA district.
Statutory Instruments	This legislation is made in accordance with provisions contained within one or more of the UK primary fisheries Acts.
UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA)	Post-Brexit agreements between the UK and EU with a section covering fisheries including how to share quota and access rights.

GLOSSARY: MARINE PROTECTED AREAS

Annex I Habitats	A natural habitat(s) listed in Annex 1 of the Habitats Directive for which Special Areas of Conservation can be designated.
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Annex II Species	A species listed in Annex II of the Habitats Directive for which Special Areas of Conservation can be designated.
Annex I Species (Birds Directive)	A particularly threatened species for which EU member states must designate Special Areas of Protection for their survival, and all migratory bird species.
Appropriate Assessment	The process and documentation associated with the statutory requirement under the EC Habitats Directive to assess the impact of a plan or project on a European site
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)	Area of high landscape value protected by law to conserve and enhance its natural beauty.
Assemblage	A collection of plants and/or animals characteristically associated with a particular environment.
Competent Authority	Any minister, government department, public or statutory undertaker, public body or person holding a public office that exercises legal powers (see also relevant authority).
Conservation objective	The goal of maintaining or restoring natural habitats and populations of species of wild fauna and flora at a favourable conservation status.
European Site	A Special Protection Area (SPA) designated under the EC Birds Directive, or a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) designated under the EC Habitats Directive.
European Marine Site	A European site (SAC or SPA) which consists of marine areas.
Favourable Condition	A range of conditions for a natural habitat or species at which the sum of the influences acting upon that habitat or species are not adversely affecting its distribution, abundance, structure or function within an individual Natura 2000 site in the long term. The condition in which the habitat or species is capable of sustaining itself on a long-term basis.
Feature	A natural or semi-natural feature for which a European site has been selected.
Habitat	The place in which an animal or plant lives.
Habitat Regulations Assessment	An assessment required under the EC Habitats Directive of the impacts of plans or projects on European sites.
Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM)	Co-ordinated management of the coastal and inshore marine area across multiple sectors, taking a long-term approach to planning.
Likely Significant Effect (LSE)	The first step of a Habitat Regulations Assessment to determine whether a plan or project might impact a European site.
Littoral	The margins of a body of water, an area which is occasionally washed by the tide
Maintain	The action required for an interest feature when it is considered to be in favourable condition. Management may still be required to keep this status.
Management Group	A group of statutory and non-governmental organisations working in partnership to manage a European Marine Site.
Management Scheme	The framework established by the relevant authorities at a European marine site under which their functions are exercised to secure, in relation to that site, compliance with the requirements of the Habitats Directive.

Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ)	Marine areas in English waters designated under the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 to protect marine habitats and species typical of UK waters.
Marine Conservation Zone Assessment	An assessment required under the Marine and Coastal Access Act of the impacts of plans, projects or activities within MCZs.
Marine Protected Area	A marine area that is protected by statutory or voluntary measures to control human activity. The term is also used to describe Scotland's national network of marine nature conservation sites.
Natura 2000 Network	The European network of protected sites established under the Birds Directive and the Habitats Directive, made up of SPAs and SACs.
National Nature Reserve (NNR)	Important areas for wildlife which are protected, managed and accessible.
Plan or Project	Any proposed development that is within a relevant authority's function to control, or over which a competent authority has a statutory function to decide on applications for consents, authorisations, licences or permissions.
Ramsar Site	A site held on the list of wetlands of international importance, especially as habitats for wildfowl, under the Ramsar convention.
Relevant Authority	The specific competent authority which has powers or functions which have, or could have, an impact on the marine environment within or adjacent to a European Marine Site.
Restore	The action required for bringing a qualifying feature back to favourable condition.
Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	Areas designated in the UK for their internationally important flora, fauna and geological features.
Shoreline Management Plan	A document setting out strategic guidance for the management of coastal defence over the next 20, 50 and 100 years.
Special Area of Conservation (SAC)	An area designated under the European Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC.
Special Protection Area (SPA)	An area designated under the European Birds Directive 79/409/EEC
Statutory Nature Conservation Body	Government's main advisors for the natural environment – Natural England and Scottish Natural Heritage in England and Scotland respectively.
Steering Group	A group of statutory and non-governmental organisations with delegated powers from the Management Group. The Steering Group oversees the work of the Implementation Officer.
Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)	The assessment of environmental effects of major strategic plans. SEA is a European requirement.
Sub-Feature	An important component part of a qualifying feature – e.g. kelp forests are a sub-feature of the rocky reef.
Voluntary Marine Reserve	A marine area that is protected through voluntary agreements with site users.

GLOSSARY: OTHER/FISHERIES AND ENVIRONMENTAL

Berried crab/lobster	A crab or lobster with eggs or spawn attached to the tail or other exterior part.
By-catch	A fish or other marine species that is caught unintentionally while catching target species.
Carapace Length	The carapace length of a lobster is measured from the rear of the eye socket to the rear of the carapace on a line parallel to the centre line of the body.
Carapace Width	The carapace width of a crab is measured from the widest part of a crab's carapace.
Crustacea	A group of arthropods, which includes crabs, lobsters, crayfish and shrimp.
Discards	Those components of a fish stock thrown back after capture e.g. because they are below the minimum landing size or because quota have been exhausted for that species.
Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)	The assessment of environmental effects of major projects and development proposals to inform decision making. EIA is a European requirement.
Escape gaps	An opening in the pot of a size that allows undersized target and non-target species to escape, whilst retaining legal sized target species.
Ground-truthing	The collection of ground-truth data enables the accuracy of remote-sensing data (such as underwater video footage) to be determined, aiding the interpretation and analysis of the remotely-sensed data.
Landing Obligation	Under the landing obligation all catches have to be kept on board, landed and counted against quotas. Undersized fish cannot be marketed for human consumption.
Management Regime	The current NIFCA management regime consists of byelaws and regulations.
Maximum Landing Size (MaxLS)	Lobsters greater than the MaxLS in Scotland should be returned to the sea.
Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY)	MSY is the largest average yield (catch) that can theoretically be taken from a species' stock over an indefinite period under constant environmental conditions.
Minimum Conservation Reference Size	The size for a given species below which the sale of catches shall be restricted to reduction to fish-meal, pet food or other non-human consumption products only. (MCRS)
Minimum Landing Size (MLS)	The EU Common Fisheries Policy implemented EU minimum landing sizes (MLS) now known as Conservation Reference Sizes (CRS) for quota species which define the smallest fish measurement at which it is legal to keep or sell a fish.
Mitigation	The action of reducing the severity or seriousness of something.
Stock Assessment	Provide fisheries managers with the information that is used in the regulation of a fish stock. Biological and fisheries data are collected in a stock assessment.

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)	Assesses the impact on the environment from public plans, programmes and strategies
Sustainability	The collection of policies and strategies employed by companies to minimize their environmental impact on future generations.
Soft shelled Crab/Lobster	A crab or lobster which has recently cast its shell
Stakeholder	Any organisation or individual that has a direct interest in actions or decisions. Their interest may be because they will have a role in implementing the decisions, or because they will be affected by the decision.
Total Allowable Catch (TAC)	Catch limits (expressed in tonnes or numbers) that are set for most commercial fish stocks.
V-notching	V-notching puts a notch in the tail flap of a lobster, predominantly sized and berried female lobsters (87mm or larger). This gives the female one or two more chances of spawning before being eligible for recapture. It is an offence to land a V-notched lobster, male or female.

GLOSSARY: ENFORCEMENT

Automatic Identification System (AIS)	An automatic tracking system used on ships and by vessel traffic services (VTS) for identifying and locating vessels by electronically exchanging data with other nearby ships, AIS base stations, and satellites.
Code of Conduct	A set of rules outlining the social norms and rules and responsibilities of, or proper practices for, an individual, party or organization.
Global Positioning System (GPS)	A satellite-based navigation system.
Landings	The catches of marine fish landed at a port.
Patrols	Monitoring of a specific geographic area.
Permit	An official document giving someone authorization to fish.
Pot Limitation	Limits the number of pots a permit holder can fish within the district (the NIFCA limit is 800 pots).
(Inshore) Vessel Monitoring System (iVMS or VMS)	Systems that are used in commercial fishing to allow environmental and fisheries regulatory organisations to track and monitor the activities of fishing vessels.

GLOSSARY: FISHING METHODS AND GEAR

Angling	The sport or pastime of fishing with a rod and line
Bait Collection	The collection of intertidal animals to use as bait.
Bait Digging	Method of collecting angling bait which uses a fork, pump or spade to target lugworm and ragworm living in intertidal sediment.
Cleek	Pole with a hook on the end used for catching lobsters.
Cleeking	A method of catching lobsters in the intertidal zone using a long pole with

a hook on the end.

Cod-end	The end of a towed net where the catch collects.
Crab Tiling	Collecting soft shelled shore crabs referred to as peeler crabs for use as angling bait. Shelters made from tyres or pipes or set on intertidal sediment.
Dahn	A pole with a float, weight and flag attached.
Dredge	A rigid structure towed on the seabed in order to collect target species
Drift net	Nets which hang vertically in the water column without being anchored to the bottom. The nets are kept vertical in the water by floats attached to a rope along the top of the net and weights attached to another rope along the bottom of the net.
Fixed Engine	A fixed (stationary) net used for the taking of fish.
Gill Net	A single wall of netting that can either be fixed or allowed to drift.
Hand Gathering	The process of gathering sea fisheries resources by hand for food or bait.
J-Net	A net in the shape of the letter 'J'.
Marker Buoy	Any surface marker float which can be used to identify the location of fishing gear.
Mobile Gear	Any dredge, trawl or similar device that is designed to be towed or pushed to take sea fisheries resources on the seabed.
Net	Any trammel, gill, tangle or other enmeshing net used for the capturing of sea fish.
Passive Gear	Longlines or nets which are rigged with top, bottom and connecting ropes and may be equipped with anchoring, floating and navigational gear.
Pot	Any pot, creel, trap or cage used for the catching of sea fish.
Purse Seine Net	A large circular net which surrounds fish to capture them.
Static Gear	Static gear is set to allow fish to swim into it, or to attract fish by bait, and consequently become caught in the gear (e.g. pots).
Tangle Net	A net with large meshes set on the seabed.
T-net	A net in the shape of the letter 'T'.
Trammel Net	A net which consists of 3 parallel panels with different mesh sizes.
Trawling	The operation of towing a net to catch fish.

GLOSSARY - SPECIES:

A list of the minimum conservation reference sizes for the following species will be found on the FAQ page of the Authority website.

Brown/Edible Crab *Cancer pagurus*



Lobster *Homarus gammarus*



Velvet Crab *Necora puber*



Green Crab *Carcinus maenas*



Spider Crab *Maja squinado*



Stone Crab (often referred to as a spider crab) *Lithodes maja*



**Prawn/
Nephrops**

*Nephrops
norvegicus*



Whelk

*Buccinum
undatum*



Periwinkle

Littorina littorea



Blue Mussel

Mytilus edulis



**Native
Oyster**

Ostrea edulis



**Pacific
Oyster**

*Crassostrea
gigas*



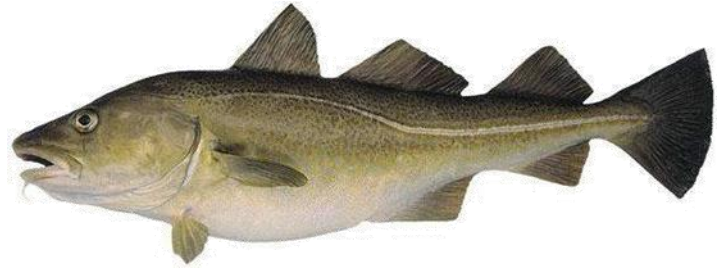
Scallop

Pecten maximus



Cod

Gadus morhua



Haddock

Melanogrammus aeglefinus



Plaice

Pleuronectes platessa



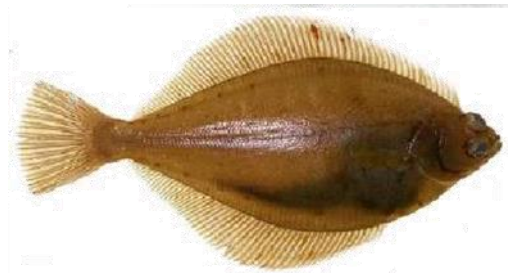
Flounder

Platichthys flesus



Dab

Limanda limanda



Bass

Dicentrarchus labrax



Herring

Clupea harengus



Sprat

Sprattus sprattus



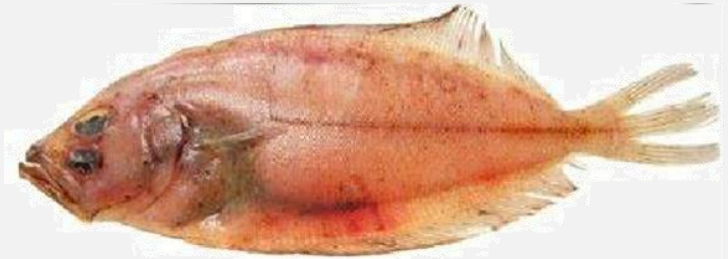
Mackerel

Scomber spp.



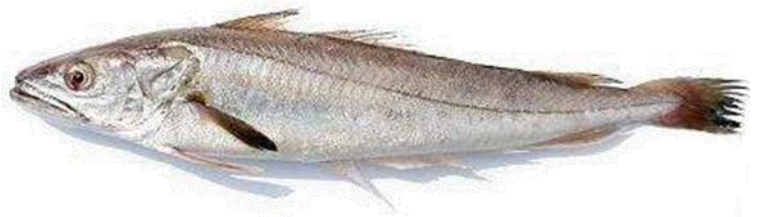
Megrim

Lepidorhombus spp.



Hake

Merluccius merluccius



Pollock

Pollachius pollachius



Whiting

*Merlangius
merlangus*



Ling

Molva molva



Saithe

Pollachius virens



Turbot

*Scophthalmus
maxima*



Local Protected Sites

Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)

Berwickshire and North Northumberland Coast

SAC

Tweed Estuary SAC

Special Protection Areas (SPA)

Northumbria Coast SPA

Coquet Island SPA

Farne Islands SPA

Lindisfarne SPA

Northumberland Marine SPA

Marine Conservation Zones (MCZ)

Aln Estuary MCZ

Coquet to St Mary's MCZ

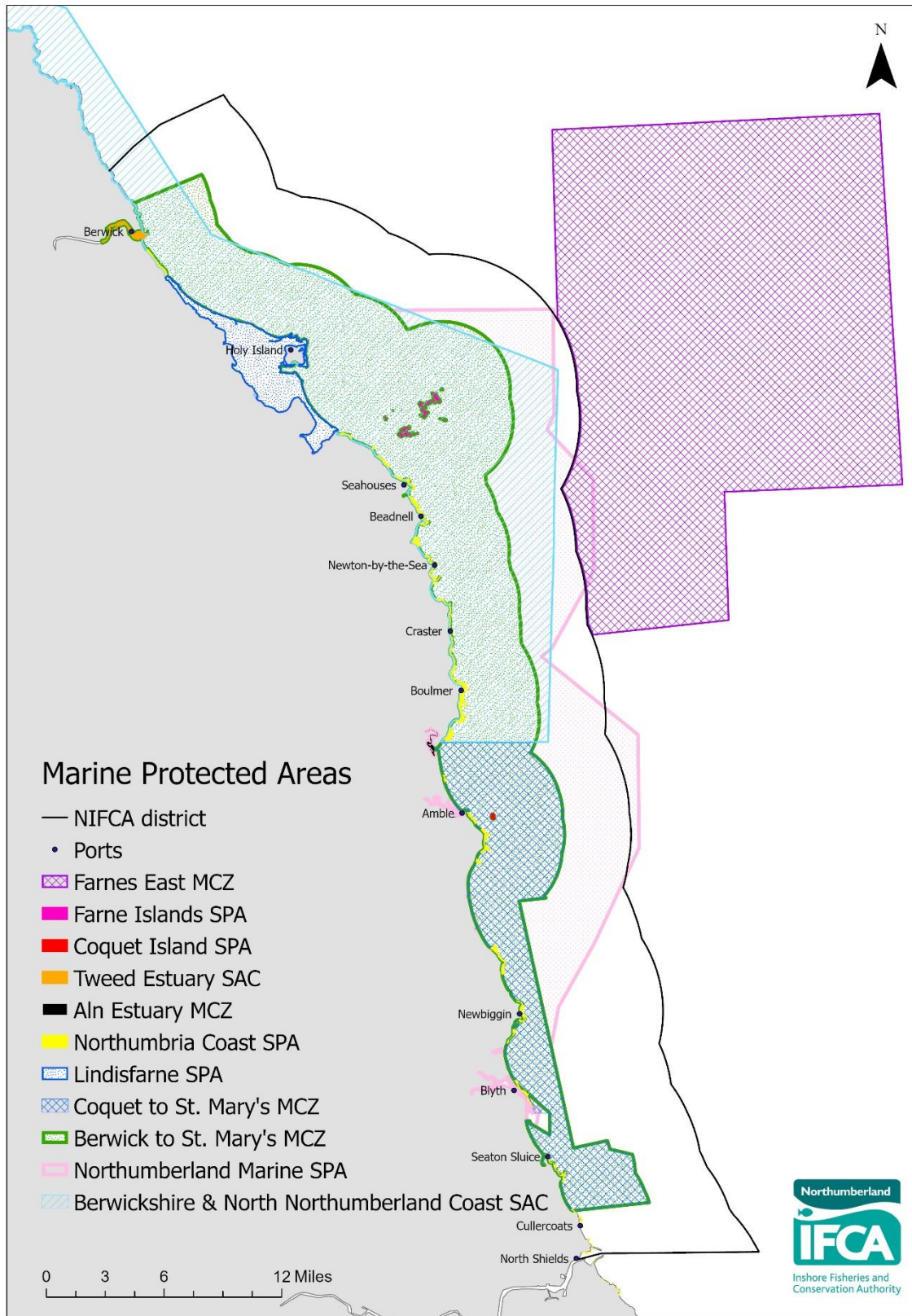
Farnes East MCZ

Berwick to St Mary's MCZ

Sites of Special Scientific Interest

Northumberland Shore SSSI

MPAs in the NIFCA District



NOTES:



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