Vision

The Eastern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority 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

**Regulation and Compliance Sub Committee meeting**

**Addendum to Action Item 5 (pg 10)**

13 December 2016

**Report by**: L. Godwin T/Senior IFCO / Staff Officer and J. Gregory CEO

**Addendum to Action Item 5 (page 10) Shrimp Permit Byelaw 2016**

Flexible permit conditions

Footprint calculations relate primarily to limiting the impact of the ‘shoe’ component of the shrimp fishing gear in relation to the two ‘at risk’ sub-features. At the proposed level of activity, interaction between the ‘shoes’ and sensitive habitats will be limited to one interaction in every two years.

The assessment also considered all gear components in relation to the sub-tidal mixed sediment sub-feature (i.e. the footrope, bobbins and net). This is a reflection of the epifaunal (i.e. surface dwelling) species which form part of the habitat, potentially being sensitive to surface abrasion. Under the proposed effort limitation, interaction between all gear components and sub-tidal mixed sediment are estimated as being limited to one interaction in every one year (i.e. a higher exposure than in the case of shoes).

Analysis of sighting data in relation shrimp fishing vessels has indicated that around 8% of shrimp fishing activity occurs over or within 0.5km the sub-tidal mixed sediment sub-feature. Given that a significant proportion of the sub-feature is being closed, this will reduce the likelihood of interaction with shrimp fishing gear which has been taken into account. Furthermore, the ‘open’ areas of the sub-tidal mixed sediment are likely to be exposed to a greater degree of natural disturbance (thought to be an order of magnitude greater than that of fishing activity). Sub-tidal mixed sediment encompasses a range of biotopes and sediment types (i.e. from course through to mud and other fine sediments). It is therefore likely that the epifauna associated with the shallower sub-tidal mixed sediment is more resilient than that in deeper areas, less sensitive to surface abrasion (which is thought to be analogous to natural disturbance) and is likely to have shorter recovery times.

Given the precautionary analysis of sightings data (i.e. including sightings within 0.5km of the sub-feature), the large proportion of closures in relation to the sub-feature and the likely resilience of the species associated with it, it is considered that, at the proposed levels of fishing activity, there is not likely to be an adverse effect on site integrity as a result of this interaction. The above rationale has not been applied to the assessment of ‘shoes’ as there is no ‘natural’ equivalent to shallow or sub-surface penetration and as such, a more precautionary approach is required. Furthermore, this is subject to additional scrutiny from Natural England.