



Regulation and Compliance Strategy

Introduction

Eastern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority (IFCA) is one of ten IFCAs covering the English coastline and the Isles of Scilly. Its district encompasses all tidal waters in the counties of Lincolnshire, Norfolk and Suffolk from Haile Sand Fort in the north to Felixstowe in the south and six nautical miles out to sea. Eastern IFCA's vision is:

To 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.

All ten IFCAs have the remit to manage inshore fisheries resources and to protect Marine Protected Areas (Marine Conservation Zones and European Marine Sites) within their district. Because the issues relating to fisheries and MPAs vary from district to district, each IFCA is empowered to provide management measures which are in keeping with local conditions.

Objective

Management measures required for inshore fisheries resources and to protect MPAs will vary within the Eastern IFCA district as a consequence of a varied fishing industry and a dynamic marine environment. As a consequence, it is important that the approach applied to management is well understood, consistent and fair. Whilst decisions may differ from one part of the district to another, the principles underpinning them will remain consistent.

This strategy provides the framework within which Eastern IFCA will fulfil its regulatory and compliance remit and it should be read in conjunction with the Strategic Assessment, Compliance Risk Register and Enforcement Policy.

Principles

Fisheries management can only succeed with an integrated approach encompassing communication, research and enforcement. The following principles underpin Eastern IFCA's approach to regulation and compliance:

- **Education, empowerment and consultation** – Compliance with sustainable fisheries practices are most successfully obtained through a co-management approach. To achieve this fishers accept that management measures will be required to achieve sustainable, environmentally compatible exploitation of fisheries and take an active part in consultation in order to assist with the development of coherent management measures. Eastern IFCA will ensure appropriate engagement with relevant stakeholders when developing or reviewing management measures
- **Bottom-up approach** – A regulate-first approach may lead to other, possibly more appropriate measures not being considered. Eastern IFCA will always consider non-regulatory measures prior to proposing regulation

- **Collaboration and commonality** – Local issues require local solutions, however managing inshore fisheries resources in isolation of partner organisations will lead to complicated regulatory frameworks which will be difficult to understand and to comply with. Eastern IFCA will seek appropriate engagement with partners when developing management measures
- **Evidence based management** – Management measures will be based upon the best available evidence and will be periodically reviewed to ensure that they remain relevant. In the absence of comprehensive evidence a precautionary approach will be taken where it is judged necessary and appropriate
- **Balance and sustainability** – Achieving the right balance between social, environmental and economic benefits to ensure healthy seas, sustainable fisheries and a viable industry is explicit in our vision. Without sustainable fisheries there cannot be a viable industry and as such Eastern IFCA will seek to develop and maintain management measures that ensure the sustainability of inshore fisheries
- **Endorsing compliance** – Clarity on regulation together with guidance and advice are essential to ensure compliance. The Eastern IFCA approach is to encourage compliance with regulation but sanctions are also available to deter, punish and remove any benefit from non-compliance in line with the Enforcement Policy
- **Risk-based enforcement** – Eastern IFCA will adopt a targeted approach to enforcement to make best use of its limited resources. Enforcement resources will be targeted at the highest areas of risk and in accordance with the Enforcement Policy

Tactical Approach

This strategy is underpinned by the following elements, which together will ensure a cohesive approach to regulation and compliance.

Strategic Assessment

A comprehensive risk assessment of all fisheries and Marine Protected Areas within the district will be undertaken and refreshed annually. It will combine fisheries data and other evidence to identify fisheries and MPAs that require management measures or changes in management measures and will list them for action in order of priority.

Compliance Risk Register

A comprehensive risk assessment of all fisheries and regulated Marine Protected Areas within the district will be undertaken annually. It will assess the risks of non-compliance with EU, UK and local fisheries and environmental legislation (byelaws) in order to inform enforcement activity.

Tasking and Co-ordination Group (TCG)

The purpose of the TCG is to ensure appropriate tasking of enforcement resources. It achieves this through consideration of risks identified in the Compliance Risk Register, emerging issues and new intelligence. It usually meets weekly during the summer and fortnightly during the winter.

Enforcement Policy

This policy sets out Eastern IFCA's approach to compliance and enforcement. It provides that an adaptive co-management approach will be taken, where compliance is achieved through engagement, advice and understanding. It also provides the range of sanctions open to the Authority where compliance is not achieved through this approach.