



## **Research & Environment Strategy**

**2013 - 2018**



1. *RV Three Counties*

This document is available in electronic form from the Eastern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority website:

[www.eastern-ifca.gov.uk](http://www.eastern-ifca.gov.uk)

Alternatively a hard copy can be viewed at the following location:

Eastern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority  
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PE30 2JG

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2. Sprats



3. Lobster

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## Research and Environment Strategy: 2013-2018

The role of a strategy is to act as the planning link between the long term vision and the day-to-day outputs of an organisation. It should act as a guide when making decisions about what actions and activities an organisation should pursue in achieving its vision. It also has the role of connecting the activities of the organisation with the wider context in which it operates.

**The vision for the Eastern IFCA 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'**

**Reflecting on this, discussion has broken this vision into areas of work looking at the community in which we operate (**local**), the environment we are focused on (**sea**), the mechanisms that administer this (**managed**) and an aspiration (**well**).**

Each of these areas are discussed further and importantly, include guidelines for decision makers to consider.

The Research and Environment Strategy will be revisited annually to make sure it is of relevance to decision makers within the Authority. This will be done at the time of drafting and discussing the annual research and environment plans with the planning and communications sub-committee.



4. Cockles





## 5. Eastern IFCA District

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## Local Seas Managed Well

High Level Marine Objective<sup>1</sup> - **All** those who have a stake in the marine environment **have an input** into associated decision-making

The Eastern IFCA district extends across the three counties of Lincolnshire, Norfolk and Suffolk and six nautical miles out to sea. Management in our district requires an intimate knowledge of local issues and management measures appropriate to the local situation. As such we draw on the local knowledge and expertise of our staff and our stakeholders.

Our stakeholders include local authorities, environmental groups, commercial and recreational sea users and the wider public. In all we do we must remain conscious that our freedom to operate, cohesion and strength are drawn from, remaining relevant to our stakeholders. As such, relevance to stakeholders in these three counties represents our centre of gravity and directs all our work.

Success Criteria 4 - *IFCA's work in partnership and are engaged with their stakeholders.*

To be successful we must maintain and improve our intimate relationship with our stakeholders. We undertook a benchmarking study at the beginning of 2013 to better understand how our stakeholders view our priorities (Box 1).

The results of this survey will in part direct the efforts of the Marine Environment and Research team. We further engage with our stakeholders during a consultation called 'bright ideas', in which stakeholders suggest relevant projects that the Marine Environment and Research team could undertake in the coming year.

As we have limited resources, we use the results of the benchmarking study

### Box 1

#### IFCA Priorities (according to those surveyed)

- Improving sustainability of marine life by managing the exploitation of sea fisheries resources - 74.4% responded 'very important'
- Enforcement - 72.1% responded 'very important'
- Improving the natural marine environment with marine conservation projects - 64.8% responded 'very important'
- Promoting fisheries sustainability throughout the district - 61.6% responded 'very important'
- Responding to consultations - 59.4% responded 'very important'
- Undertaking research to improve understanding of the impacts of fisheries - 59.8% responded 'very important'
- Working in partnership with other organisations and stakeholders to effectively gather and share information - 58.9% responded 'very important'
- Involvement in community projects - 34.7% responded 'very important'

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<sup>1</sup> Defra (2009) Our seas – a shared resource. High Level Marine Objectives. Defra. London

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and the 'bright ideas' consultation to prioritise which projects will be taken forward. In doing so, we will be achieving success criteria

**What this means for decision makers?**

- The community is diverse (outside our traditional catchment of commercial fishermen) and research and environment projects should embrace this diversity
- In a diverse community, the values of and around the coast change depending on experience, engagement and expectations
- With this diversity, priorities should reflect the considerations of the communities involved and efforts should be undertaken to avoid a narrow focus of works
- The IFCA should actively seek engagement and feedback with the widest possible cross section of the community
- Research and Environment activities should be co-ordinated with Enforcement as well as other regulators/managers



6. Local fisherman



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## Local **Seas** Managed Well

The Eastern IFCA district is an area of 3800 square kilometres. It extends seawards six miles from the Haile Sand Fort off the Lincolnshire coast in the North to Felixstowe in Suffolk in the South.

Our district encompasses almost all aspects of sea use. Ensuring that the marine environment and its resources are used to maximise sustainable activity, prosperity and opportunities for all<sup>1</sup> is reflected in our vision statement.

*Eastern IFCA will - Secure the right balance between social, environmental and economic benefits.*

We will achieve this vision by understanding the marine environment, its resources and its use within our district.

### **Conservation**

The district encompasses every existing UK and EU form of Marine Protected Area (including Site of Special Scientific Interests, Special Protected Areas, Special Areas of Conservation and Ramsar) and several Marine Conservation Zones, one of which has been put forward for designation in 2013.



7. Edible crab

### **Box 2**

#### **High Level Marine Objective - Ensuring a strong, healthy and just society**

Key aspects for Eastern IFCA –

- People appreciate the diversity of the marine environment, its seascapes, its natural and cultural heritage and its resources, and act responsibly
- The use of the marine environment is benefiting society as a whole, contributing to resilient and cohesive communities that can adapt to coastal erosion and flood risk, as well as contributing to physical and mental wellbeing
- There is equitable access for those who want to use and enjoy the coast, seas and their wide range of resources and assets, and recognition that for some island and peripheral communities the sea plays a significant role in their community



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## **Fishing**

Commercial fishing activity includes a large cockle fishery with over 50 boats participating, a seed mussel fishery which supports mussel aquaculture, a shrimp fishery, crab and lobster fishing of the north Norfolk Coast (including Cromer Crab), and several smaller fin fish fisheries. Our district also supports many important recreational fisheries such as mackerel and bass. Many of these activities in particular support coastal communities and their unique cultural heritage.



8. Beam trawler

## **Offshore energy**

The marine environment is being used more and more to meet the UK's energy demands and fulfil the UK's promise to acquire twenty per cent of its energy from renewable sources. Examples in our district include the offshore wind farms (for example the Sheringham Shoal Wind Farm off the north Norfolk Coast) and natural gas exploration.

## **Offshore aggregates**

The eastern region is one of the most important areas in the UK for aggregate extraction providing materials for construction across the world. Some of the most heavily utilised areas are off the coast of Lincolnshire.

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## Recreational activities

Everything from rambling to water sports is enjoyed somewhere in our district. Bird watchers in particular value the Wash as one of the most important areas for migratory bird species in the UK.

Box 2 highlights aspects of the High Level Marine Objective on sea use. In achieving our vision, Eastern IFCA will have contributed to the Governments endeavours to achieve its vision, in particular with regards to ensuring a strong, healthy and just society. The Eastern Marine Plan<sup>2</sup> will set out the priorities with regard to sea use over the next twenty years. Eastern IFCA will endeavour to ensure that all marine activities within our district balance to reflect our vision.

### What this means for decision makers?

- The Eastern IFCA district is large with considerable conflicting and overlapping activities
- Co-ordination is needed with the other activities within the district
- The community appreciate the diversity of the marine environment and where possible would seek improvements in the quality of their experience
- Businesses are able to flourish with the understanding of clear service levels expected from the Eastern IFCA



9. Recreational angler

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<sup>2</sup> Aiming for consultation publication summer 2013

<http://www.marinemangement.org.uk/marineplanning/index.htm>

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## Local Seas **Managed Well**

IFCAs are local delivery bodies with a key role in the achievement of the UK vision for **clean, safe, productive and biologically diverse oceans and seas**. The role of the Research and Environment Team within Eastern IFCA involves obtaining biological, environmental and socio-economic evidence that in turn supports the development of locally-relevant fisheries management measures. This strategy provides a context for this work, to ensure that it directs the Authority towards nationally-agreed outputs as well as being locally relevant. Eastern IFCAs Research and Environment projects are identified annually in our Research and Environment Plans.

To achieve relevance to national and local stakeholders, from commercial fisheries, and from recreational and conservation sectors, the Authority seeks to balance its Research and Environment work. The work will develop understanding of issues affecting sea fisheries resources, conserve fishery stocks, wildlife and habitats, and enhance the marine ecosystem and fisheries opportunities. Key research areas include fisheries stock assessment, habitat mapping and fisheries impact monitoring. Environmental work streams focus on management of fisheries within marine protected areas, and providing advice to regulators in relation to other licensed marine activities.

The key legislative drivers behind the Research and Environment strategy are shown in Table 1.



10. Common lobster (Homarus

Table 1. Key legislation driving Eastern IFCA Research and Environment work

<b>Legislation/Policy</b>	<b>Influence</b>
Marine & Coastal Access Act 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishment of IFCAs</li> <li>• Duty to seek sustainable exploitation of sea fisheries resources</li> <li>• Balance socio-economic benefits with protection of marine environment</li> <li>• Contribute to sustainable development</li> <li>• Balance different needs of persons exploiting sea fisheries resources</li> <li>• Further the conservation objectives of marine conservation zones</li> <li>• Take decisions according to marine policy documents (marine plans)</li> </ul>
Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protection of Sites of Special Scientific Interest</li> <li>• Duty to liaise with Natural England before carrying out, or authorising, activities that could affect the features of Sites of Special Scientific Interest</li> </ul>
EU Habitats Directive 1992, EU Birds Directive 2010, UK Habitats Regulations 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Management of fisheries within European Marine Sites (Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas): assessment of the impact of fishing activities on protected species and habitats</li> </ul>
The Wash Fishery Order 1992	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regulation of prescribed bivalve fisheries in The Wash, including setting bespoke management measures each year according to stock and environmental conditions</li> </ul>
UK Marine Policy Statement 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IFCAs are expected to participate fully in wider marine planning: participation in development of Marine Plans and regular engagement with MMO marine planning</li> </ul>
EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive 2008, UK Marine Strategy Regulations 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work towards achievement of good environmental status for descriptors relating to fisheries (e.g. healthy fish and shellfish stocks, non-indigenous species, biodiversity, seafloor integrity)</li> <li>• Need for close working with partner bodies such as Environment Agency in relation to monitoring status.</li> </ul>
EU Water Framework Directive 2000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work towards achievement of good ecological status, in partnership with the Environment Agency</li> </ul>
EU Infrastructure for Spatial Information in Europe (INSPIRE) Directive 2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Duty to publish and manage data (with a particular emphasis on spatial data) to enable its dissemination and interpretation</li> </ul>
EU Shellfish Waters Directive 2006 & EU Food Hygiene Regulations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monthly sampling of shellfish from public fishery beds for hygiene analysis, in partnership with local authority environmental health offices; water sampling for Cefas</li> </ul>



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During 2013-2018, key research and environment priorities towards successful management will be:

- Stock assessment of Wash Fishery Order fisheries
- Sustainability assessment of crustacean and finfish fisheries within Eastern IFCA district
- Assessment of fishery impacts on marine protected areas
- Development and operation of improved data management systems

Furthermore, in order to manage our local seas well, Eastern IFCA recognises the value of involving stakeholders in decision-making. This enhances understanding of issues for both managers and site users, and promotes responsibility and compliance with regulations. Eastern IFCA has over several years developed an adaptive, co-management approach for the management of the Wash Fishery Order regulated fisheries. This has been highlighted as best practice in local fisheries management, and the Authority will seek to apply this approach, through the Research and Environment Strategy as well as our over-arching Strategic Plan, as well advance the management of all fisheries in our district.

#### **What this means for decision makers?**

- There is a need for clear understanding and guidance on the role of Eastern IFCA in the marine environment
- That there is a need for a strong information base to make decisions
- That there is a balance between local desires and the requirements of national, regional and international commitments
- Eastern IFCA must work in partnership with other organisations to gather and share data
- Demonstrating an in-house capability to collect, analyse and interpret evidence to inform management policy decisions
- The adoption of the principles of best practice in sustainable management of the marine environment
- The main issues affecting the sustainable exploitation of sea fisheries resources in the district are understood, and appropriate management plans for them are put in place

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## Local Seas Managed **Well**

The Government has set five High Level Marine Objectives<sup>3</sup> which are required to achieve **clean, safe, productive and biologically diverse oceans and seas**. As IFCA's, we are responsible for contributing to aspects of this vision within the scope of our remit.

In 2009, Defra hosted a workshop to set out what success would look like for the IFCA's. The workshop was attended by representatives of the Sea Fisheries Committees, local and central Government, fishing industry representatives and environmental organisations. The outcome was the IFCA's vision statement and the seven Success Criteria<sup>4</sup> which are required to fulfil this vision.

Eastern IFCA vision statement - *"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**."*

In saying that we will manage local seas **well**, we are committing ourselves to meeting the Success Criteria and achieving our Vision.

### Box 4

#### Success Criteria relevant to the Marine Environment and Research team at Eastern IFCA

- Evidence based, appropriate and timely byelaws are used to manage the exploitation of sea fisheries resources with the district
- IFCA's work in partnership and are engaged with their stakeholders
- IFCA's make the best use of evidence to deliver their objectives
- IFCA's support and promote the sustainable management of the marine environment



11. Bass

## What 'Well' looks like...

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<sup>3</sup> Our Seas – a shared resource. High level marine objectives.

<sup>4</sup> Defra(2010)

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## Healthy Seas

- Ecosystems which are resilient to environmental change and capable of providing services and resources to the benefit of society
- Representative and rare species and habitats protected from damage and able to contribute to the UK's marine diversity
- Achieving "Good Environmental Status" and "Good Status" as required by the European Marine Strategy Framework Directive and the European Water Framework Directive respectively

## Sustainable Fisheries

- Fisheries are operating in a way that reflects environmental limits
- Long-term, strategic decisions are made to ensure sea fisheries resources are available for future generations

## Viable Industry

- The use of the inshore marine environment is benefiting society as a whole
- Inshore fisheries resources are equally available to recreational and commercial sea users alike
- Management decisions reflect the importance of cultural heritage of coastal communities



12. Butterfish

### **What this means for decision makers?**

- That the Eastern IFCA is exemplar in the way it plans and carries out its activities
- That decisions are made on the best available evidence
- Where evidence is limited, the precautionary principle is applied
- Activities and decisions should provide the widest possible benefit to the full community
- The community should understand our role better and experience continual improvements in our service, and decision making as well as recognise improvements in the marine environment

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## Bright Idea Form

Our aim is to deliver responsive and flexible management of sea fisheries resources, to meet local needs.

To do this we need your help... we want to hear your ideas about work that Eastern IFCA could undertake for the benefit of our local seas.



### 1. What is the idea? (please feel free to use additional paper)

### 2. Where would the work need to be carried out? Please specify county and approximate location, e.g. Suffolk, Aldeburgh to Orfordness

County	Location
Norfolk <input type="checkbox"/>	.....
Suffolk <input type="checkbox"/>	.....
Lincolnshire <input type="checkbox"/>	.....

### 3. Which of the following categories does the work relate to? You may tick more than one box

Eastern Region Marine Plan <input type="checkbox"/>	Wind Farms <input type="checkbox"/>
Wash Fishery Order <input type="checkbox"/>	Marine Aggregates/dredging <input type="checkbox"/>
Other Commercial Fishery <input type="checkbox"/>	Marine Conservation Zones <input type="checkbox"/>
European Marine Sites <input type="checkbox"/>	'Non-fish' Wildlife <input type="checkbox"/>
Other Recreational fishery <input type="checkbox"/>	Cultural/Social value <input type="checkbox"/>
Enforcement <input type="checkbox"/>	Fish Sustainability/MSC <input type="checkbox"/>
Other <input type="checkbox"/>	.....



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**4. What other organisations will we need to work with?**

**5. Does the work fit in with any existing projects that you are aware of? (e.g. Cefas juvenile crab and lobster studies, Shark Trust skate and ray project, Angling 2012 study, etc.)**

**6. What practical work do you envisage being required? Please include approximate timings for the project, if known.**

**Any other comments?**

*Thank you for taking the time to send us your thoughts.*

The next step for us will be to compare all the suggestions and present the findings to our Regulatory and Compliance sub-Committee. They will make the final decision as to what is included in the final plan for the 2013/14 financial year.

You are welcome to attend any of the Authority public meetings (details on our website).

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If you would like us to confirm receipt of your suggestion and/or to keep you informed of our planning processes and the work of the Eastern IFCA, please provide your contact details:

Name : \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

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## References

Defra (2009) Our seas – a shared resource. High Level Marine Objectives. Defra. London

Defra. (2010a) Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities: Vision, Success Criteria and High Level Objectives. Defra. London.

Marine Management Organisation. (2013) Draft Eastern Inshore and offshore Marine Plan. Marine Management Organisation, Newcastle-upon-Tyne

## List of images

1. *RV Three Counties* © Eastern IFCA
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3. European lobster *Homarus gammarus* © Rob Spray & Dawn Watson  
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