



Inshore Fisheries and  
Conservation Authority

## Sea Angling Strategy

Version 2.0

## **Introduction**

This document articulates a strategy to manage and improve Recreational Sea Angling (RSA) in the Eastern district. It has been drafted by Eastern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority staff in recognition of the significant part that fisheries stock management plays in enabling RSA activity with assistance from members of the regional RSA community. The strategy applies equally to shore, boat based and match fishermen and for it to be a success, delivery of the strategy will need to be a region wide collective endeavour signed up to and delivered by public authorities, regulatory bodies and the RSA community.

The intent of the document is to state where we are, where we would wish to go, what needs to be done to get us there and, broadly, how we intend to take those steps.

## **Context**

Sea angling has always been a feature of the Eastern region and the north Norfolk coast and Suffolk in particular are renowned for the RSA experience they provide. A full spectrum of recreational activity is conducted in our region from the solitary beach based angler to businesses providing charter boats to parties of offshore anglers to the hosting of successful fishing matches.

The economic dividend from RSA activity is a key income stream for the region which deserves to be nurtured and developed. Similarly the promotion of the health and well-being effects of a day's fishing should be recognised and promoted for the greater good of the both regional and the national economies. Quantifying the dividend and benefits has always been subject to conjecture but a recent study, Sea Angling 2012 has delivered results that demand attention.

Opportunities for recreational fishing across the region are declining and the overall experience of anglers is not as positive as it could be. The natural coastal assets of the region coupled with the significant potential to secure greater economic dividend from RSA activity drives a need for a coherent strategy to improve the overall regional RSA experience by identifying and improving all the constituent elements from car parks to conflicting commercial fishing activity, from bait to litter bins and from tackle to thornback ray.

## **Background**

The Eastern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority was created under Section 150 of the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 (MaCAA) and was fully vested on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2011 in accordance with the Eastern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Order<sup>1</sup>.

The Eastern IFCA district extends seawards six nautical miles from the Haile Sand Fort off the Lincolnshire coast in the north to the river Stour in Suffolk as well as on land in the three counties of Lincolnshire, Norfolk and Suffolk. The district encompasses every existing UK and EU form of Marine Protected Area (MPA) namely, Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Special Protection Areas, Special Areas of Conservation, Ramsar sites, European Marine Sites and Marine Conservation Zones.

The national vision for Eastern IFCA is:

---

<sup>1</sup> Statutory Instrument 2010 No 2189

**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**

Through MaCAA 09 Eastern IFCA is charged with the following duties:

- **To manage the exploitation of sea fisheries resources in its district; in doing so we must:**
  - **seek to ensure that the exploitation of sea fisheries resources is carried out in a sustainable way**
  - **seek to balance the social and economic benefits of exploiting the sea fisheries resources of the district with the need to protect the marine environment from, or promote its recovery from, the effects of such exploitation**
  - **take any other steps which in the Authority's opinion are necessary or expedient for the purpose of making a contribution to the achievement of sustainable development**
  - **seek to balance the different needs of persons engaged in the exploitation of sea fisheries resources in the district**
- **To seek to ensure that the conservation objectives of any MCZ in the district are furthered**

From the duties above it is clear that Eastern IFCA has a remit to protect the marine environment whilst enabling the sustainable exploitation of sea fisheries resources. In delivering this remit there is a requirement to balance the needs of all within the fishery and to seek sustainable development opportunities. This strategy is designed to focus the delivery of those duties on the Recreational Sea Angling community.

## **Sea Angling 2012**

The Sea Angling 2012<sup>2</sup> study was established to find out how many people go sea angling in England, how much they catch, how much is released, and the economic and social value of sea angling.

The intent of the study was to help local and national policy makers make balanced, well-informed decisions on sustainable development of all forms of sea fishing, and help other organisations – such as sea angling bodies – to develop their own policies. The surveys also met UK obligations under European law to estimate recreational catches of several species including bass and cod. Data were collected from over 11,000 sea anglers in England through an Office of National Statistics (ONS) household survey, face-

---

<sup>2</sup> Sea Angling 2012 – a survey of recreational sea angling activity and economic value in England, Defra, November 2013.

to-face interviews with anglers by Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities (IFCA), catch diaries and online surveys.

The surveys estimated there are 884,000 sea anglers in England, with 2% of all adults going sea angling. These anglers make a significant contribution to the economy – in 2012, sea anglers resident in England spent £1.23 billion on the sport, equivalent to £831 million direct spend once imports and taxes had been excluded. This supported 10,400 full-time equivalent jobs and almost £360 million of gross value added (GVA). Taking indirect and induced effects into account, sea angling supported £2.1 billion of total spending, a total of over 23,600 jobs, and almost £980 million of GVA.

Sea angling also has important social and well-being benefits including providing relaxation, physical exercise, and a route for socialising. Anglers felt that improving fish stocks was the most important factor that would increase participation in sea angling.

Almost 4 million days of sea angling were recorded over the year. Shore fishing was the most common type of sea angling – almost 3 million angler-days compared with 1 million for private or rented boats and 0.1 million on charter boats. Anglers had most success on charter boats, catching 10 fish per day on average compared with around 5 from private boats and only 2 from the shore.

The most common species caught, by number, were mackerel and whiting. Shore anglers released around 75% of the fish caught, many of which were undersized, and boat anglers released around 50% of their fish.

The Sea Angling 2012 surveys of shore and boat catches give the most comprehensive estimates ever for England, and have been carried out using rigorous statistical protocols.

The full report can be viewed at:

[www.marinemanagement.org.uk/seaangling/documents/finalreport.pdf](http://www.marinemanagement.org.uk/seaangling/documents/finalreport.pdf)

## **The Need**

As the regional inshore fisheries and conservation manager, there is a need for Eastern IFCA to understand the patterns and trends of recreational sea angling in its district and then to take action to engage, monitor and manage sea fisheries resource exploitation activity. Furthermore, Eastern IFCA has a part to play in setting the conditions whereby the Eastern region can realise the full potential of opportunities to preserve, promote and publicise regional RSA activity

## **The approach**

In order to make this strategy more than simply an aspirational statement, the approach detailed below establishes a Desired End State; the condition that need to exist to achieve the End State, the effects that need to be in place to create the conditions and an indication of the actual tasks that will need to be carried out. To create a delivery plan from the strategy will require ownership to be established and independent actions coordinated through regular progress checks. As a final step a mechanism to measure effect will be needed to assess progress.

## Drivers for change

There are a plethora of reasons for change. RSA is an economically potent activity that provides both health and well being benefits and sources of employment. If the results of Angling 2012 are divided amongst the 10 inshore districts in England in a linear fashion it is not unreasonable to suggest that c90,000 people are actively participating in RSA in the district and the associated economic dividend is of the order of £200 million per annum. In a region where over 60% of the boundary is coastline much of which is renowned for RSA, it makes sense to take steps to seek to realise the full potential of the activity.

Sea Angling 2012 has studied the reasons why anglers go fishing and have encapsulated the responses as follows:



In addition, better fish stocks were cited most often as the factor that would increase participation, although cost, time and family commitments were also important.

## End State

Any undertaking needs to have a clear understanding of what it seeks to achieve and must establish a desired End State. Taking the above statements as the key requirements that recreational sea angling participants seek, a desired End State can be formulated. The End State for Sea Angling in the Eastern district is:

**A positive regional recreational sea angling experience**

## Setting the Conditions

Analysis of the desired End State will help to highlight those decisive conditions that must be set to ensure that every angler who pursues their sport or hobby in the Eastern district, on balance, receives a positive experience. The table below outlines those conditions and demonstrates that this needs to be a collective endeavour between all parties as no one stakeholder can implement all the required actions.

Condition	Explanation	Owners/Action
<b>Sufficient Opportunity</b>	In the first instance sea anglers need to have opportunities to pursue their sport/hobby. This comprises the physical ability to stand on a beach and/or boat to conduct fishing activity. Similarly, bait is an essential requirement and sufficient opportunity to source bait will be required. Closely associated to Opportunity is Accessibility as it is a requirement that sufficient opportunities are available to all who would wish to participate	Public and private landowners
<b>Sustainable stocks</b>	'More and bigger fish' is often cited as the central desire of most sea anglers. The management of fish stocks to ensure that spawning grounds and migration routes are protected, recruitment to the fishery is promoted and assisted and exploitation is managed in balance with stocks levels are key determinants in delivering sustainable stocks. Bait is an essential requirement and sustainably sourcing bait will need to be considered.	IFCA/MMO/Natural England/Public and private landowners
<b>De-conflicted activities</b>	To deliver both 'more and bigger fish' and to achieve the desired relaxation and freedom to operate, there is a requirement to manage the inevitable tension which can exist between recreational and commercial fishing activities.	IFCA/MMO & Commercial/RSA sector

	<p>This will entail sensible regulation to de-conflict the two activities in a balanced manner. This will also require discipline from both sectors to ensure that agreements and codes of conduct are adhered to.</p>	
<p><b>Sense of Value</b></p>	<p>Value has to be considered from two perspectives: that of the angler and that of the regional economic benefit.</p> <p>For the angler the experience has to be judged as worth the commitment in time and money with a reasonable expectation that there will be sufficient local infrastructure to support the activity.</p> <p>For local authorities there needs to be acknowledgement of the potential economic advantage to be gained through RSA activity (i.e. the local value of the activity) as well as a mature understanding of the worth of promoting local RSA when balanced with any resources needing to be applied.</p> <p>In the first instance this will require a dialogue to be established between the RSA sector and local authorities to identify those local area that are particularly conducive to RSA activity and worthy of further investment. It is expected that public recognition will, through market forces, drive private sector activity to provide support infrastructure such as accommodation and tackle shops.</p> <p>It is for consideration that the declaration of an intention to create of a regional centre of RSA excellence may provide the opportunity and certainty necessary to attract investment.</p>	<p>RSA sector/ Public authorities</p>

## Delivering the conditions

To achieve the conditions detailed above will require tasks to be fulfilled which, when complete, should deliver the intended conditions.

Condition	Objective	Output	Tasks	Measures of effect
Sufficient Opportunity	Maintain	Maintain current opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify all stakeholders and influential bodies.</li> <li>Create regional dialogue with Relevant Authorities (RAs) to understand plans and projects which may support or threaten current opportunities to recreationally fish</li> <li>Develop understanding of lost RSA opportunities and/or decisions that have lead to lost opportunities.</li> <li>Develop understanding of regional bait digging activity.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Compendium of baseline statistics to understand level of participation; numbers of clubs; regional competitions; number of opportunities, target species; annual catches; 5% returned; infrastructure, bait digging activity etc.etc.</li> <li>Database of RSA stakeholders and influential bodies created.</li> <li>Dialogue created with RAs and RSA activity and economic benefit acknowledged.</li> <li>RAs consider likely impact on RSA activity routinely within decision making.</li> </ul>



				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RSA routinely considered in RA tourism, sport and recreation policy.</li> <li>• Trend towards a loss of opportunity arrested.</li> <li>• Bait digging activity and access to sites identified, understood and managed.</li> </ul>
	<b>Develop</b>	Develop more opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formulate plans in concert with RAs to develop opportunities to recreationally fish and to formally market the activity to capture new participants (particularly youngsters) and rekindle interest from lapsed anglers.</li> <li>• Create an understanding of the relative value of RSA and commercial activity amongst all stakeholders via dialogue, presentations and advertising/marketing activity.</li> <li>• Engage with commercial concerns both nationally and regionally to develop</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RAs develop plans to promote RSA opportunities.</li> <li>• Greater regional interest in RSA</li> <li>• More participants generated</li> <li>• Angling Trust initiatives rolled out and owned by local RSA clubs.</li> <li>• Annual regional RSA fair developed and hosted.</li> </ul>

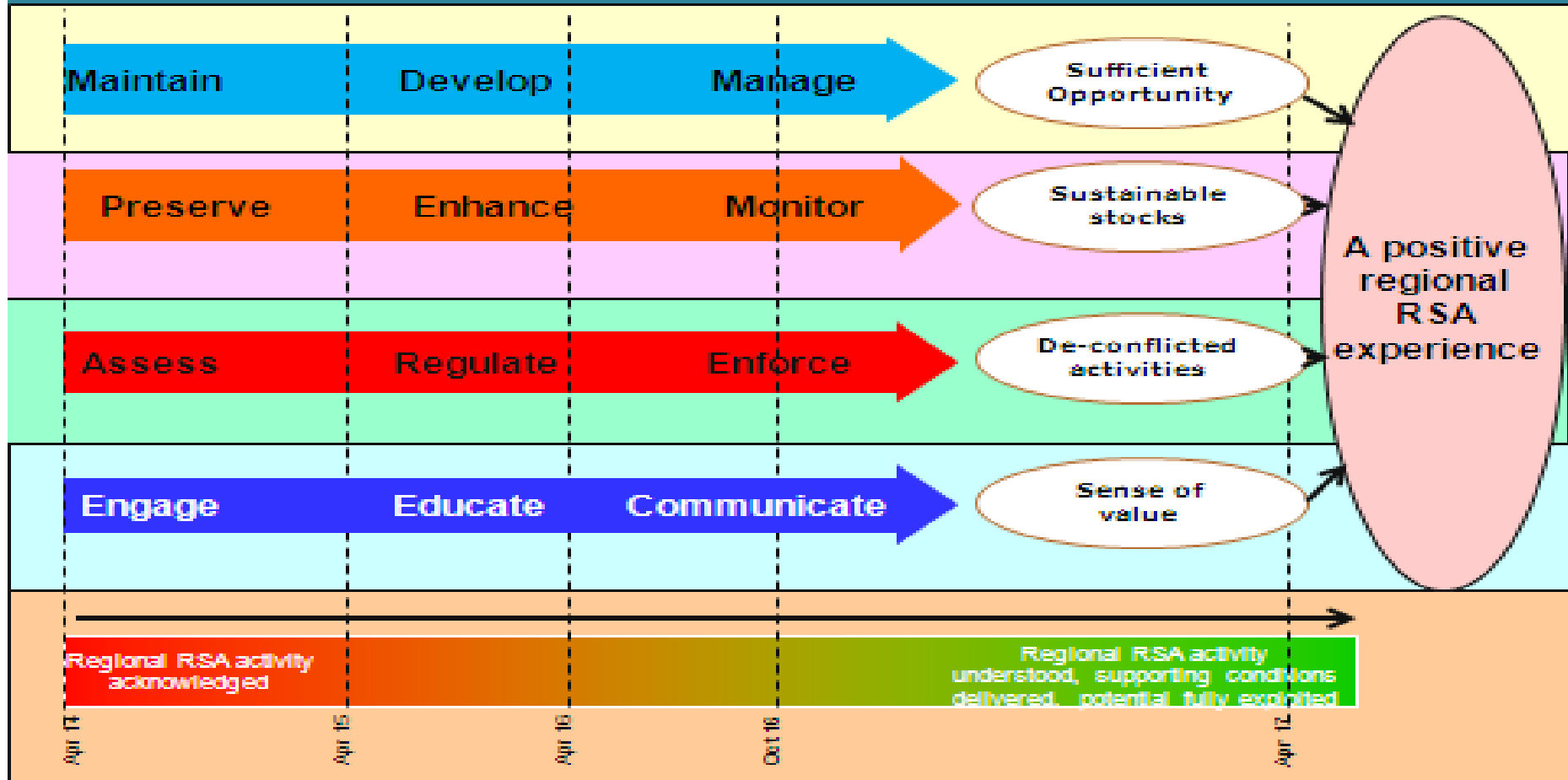
			branding and marketing initiatives.	
	<b>Manage</b>	Actively manage opportunities to ensure that full economic potential is being realised Take steps to promote regional RSA opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Once opportunities have been developed, take steps with all stakeholders to ensure that the regional RSA experience is maintained at a high level and is recognised as a national centre of excellence.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Eastern region acknowledged nationally and internationally as centre of excellence for RSA.</li> </ul>
<b>Sustainable stocks</b>	<b>Preserve</b>	Take management action with target stocks to prevent reduction below current levels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understand importance of key target species</li> <li>Identify key spawning and migration grounds through stakeholder dialogue and/or research activity</li> <li>Identify recruitment mechanism and key areas through stakeholder dialogue and/or research activity.</li> <li>Understand level of both recreational and commercial exploitation activity through research activity to ensure decline in stocks is</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Key target species identified, localised and life cycle patterns fully understood.</li> <li>Current levels of commercial and recreational exploitation understood and used to inform management measures.</li> <li>Management measures introduced to protect key grounds/species to promote greater sustainability.</li> <li>Bait digging linkage to RSA is fully recognised and bait digging activity is</li> </ul>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>arrested.</li> <li>Identify bait stocks.</li> </ul>	<p>managed to support RSA activity while not threatening the sustainability of bait stocks.</p>
	<b>Enhance</b>	Take steps to promote the sustainable development of stocks including management of exploitation, protection of spawning grounds and assisting stock recruitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Protect and monitor spawning grounds</li> <li>Take steps to promote recruitment to the fishery using appropriate regulatory measures including closed areas to ensure sustainability of stocks.</li> <li>Introduce management measures to regulate exploitation activity.</li> <li>Engage neighbouring marine managers to ensure commonality of approach</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Key spawning, migration and recruiting grounds protected using management measures up to and including byelaws.</li> <li>Consistency of approach with neighbouring regulators achieved.</li> </ul>
	<b>Monitor</b>	Conduct regular surveys to monitor stock status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Routinely monitor stock status through appropriate cross stakeholder mechanisms.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mechanism to deliver stock monitoring developed and results reported annually.</li> </ul>
<b>De-conflicted activity</b>	<b>Assess</b>	Assess level and location of conflicting fishing activity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understand who is fishing where and the target species.</li> <li>Understand when the highest intensity of conflicting activity is likely.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Competing activities identified.</li> <li></li> </ul>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understand the competing methods of exploitation.</li> </ul>	
	<b>Regulate</b>	Take steps to regulate activity to ensure stocks are not over exploited and the most economically viable fishing activity is promoted.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use management measures to assure the sustainable exploitation of sea fisheries resources by both RSA participants and commercial operators</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Solutions brokered to balance the needs of all within the fishery.</li> <li>Management measures introduced.</li> </ul>
	<b>Enforce</b>	Apply resources to ensure regulations are adhered to.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create a culture and the behaviours whereby management measures are understood, appreciated and adhered to by RSA participants.</li> <li>Monitor adherence to management measures via land based and sea based patrols.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Routine enforcement activity is programmed and reported upon monthly.</li> <li>Annual report includes summary of enforcement activity.</li> </ul>
<b>Sense of Value</b>	<b>Engage</b>	<p>Create a dialogue with all stakeholders to identify requirements and aspirations.</p> <p>Take steps to actively market regional RSA opportunities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create a regional understanding of the value of RSA activity in terms of economic dividend and health and well-being.</li> <li>Formulate plans with RAs to achieve regional buy in and appropriate support.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Value of regional RSA activity quantified and advertised.</li> <li>Mechanisms to promote existing activity/develop new opportunities identified and taken forward.</li> </ul>
	<b>Educate</b>	Educate stakeholders and wider public of the	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use RSA as a mechanism to</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public awareness of RSA activity is</li> </ul>

		<p>benefits of RSA activity.</p> <p>Inform stakeholders at a national and international level of regional RSA opportunities.</p>	<p>introduce the wider public to the marine environment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Re-brand and market the region as a centre of excellence engaging national bodies as required</li> </ul>	<p>increased.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of new participants increased.</li> <li>• Bespoke opportunities to advertise the benefits of RSA developed and delivered.</li> </ul>
	<b>Communicate</b>	<p>Continue the dialogue to bring a focus upon regional RSA activity and opportunities including supporting plans for regional RSA centres of excellence and initiatives to host an annual RSA festival.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep the conversation going via all media types to preserve interest.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eastern region acknowledged as centre of RSA excellence.</li> <li>• Regional economic dividend from RSA activity increased.</li> </ul>

# RSA Strategy Schematic



## **So What?**

The cynics will say that this strategy is yet another brightly coloured document that will not achieve its stated aim. There is a degree of truth in that if we fail to secure the buy in of all stakeholders and other influential bodies and individuals. To bring this strategy and plan to life will take energy, determination and a collective approach if anything meaningful is to be achieved. Furthermore, openness, understanding and the willingness to compromise will be necessary. That said, the prize is worth the investment and it should be recognised that there is an opportunity to transform the regional RSA experience.

Eastern IFCA has its part to play in managing both the marine environment and the fisheries within it to deliver the aspiration of more and bigger fish. We seek to assure the sustainable exploitation of sea fisheries resources including bait, and will conduct research and take management measures to achieve that statutory duty. The parallel development of the other conditions will help ensure that the regional recreational sea angling experience is positive and can be sustained.