

Shrimp Permit Byelaw 2018 – effort limitation scheme



Eastern Inshore Fisheries & Conservation Authority (Eastern IFCA) is undertaking a formal consultation regarding the effort limitation scheme associated with Category One Shrimp Permits (for fishing within the Wash and North Norfolk Coast Special Area of Conservation). The effort limitation scheme will be implemented via permit conditions associated with the Category One Permit.

The deadline for responses is 3rd March 2020.

Why do we need an effort limitation scheme?

Eastern IFCA has assessed the impacts of shrimp fishing on the protected habitats of the Wash and North Norfolk Coast Special Area of Conservation. The assessment has concluded that shrimp fishing needs to be prohibited from certain areas but that for most of the site, shrimp fishing at the levels observed over the last ten years will not have an adverse effect on site integrity.

Areas that require closure to shrimp fishing have been developed and consulted on during 2019. The measures outlined in this consultation aim to prevent increases in shrimp fishing effort through introducing an effort limitation scheme.

How will effort be limited?

Eastern IFCA will set a Total Allowable Effort each year and monitor its uptake. The available effort will be determined each year to make sure that effort does not exceed a five-year rolling average of 1101 trips per year. This means that the available effort can be higher than this in years where shrimp effort was lower in previous years and *vice versa*. The maximum available effort that will be set is 1746 trips in any given year.

If usage of the available effort is greater than expected and it appears that it may be exhausted prior to the end of the permit year (1st August to 31st July), the Authority may impose restrictions to slow the pace of the fishery so as to avoid exhausting the available effort and reduce the likelihood of an early closure.

The Authority may limit the issuing of further permits or limit the number of trips a vessel may undertake per month until the following 1st August. These restrictions can also be lifted if necessary, during that time.

Ultimately, if shrimp fishing activity continues as it has done for the last ten years, the likelihood of any restrictions being imposed is very low.

If fishers change their behaviours, for example by increasing the length of trips or individual tows, or by increasing the size of fishing gear then we will reconsider the appropriate effort restrictions. This could include reducing the number of available trips per year (as each trip may constitute more interaction between the shrimp gear and the seabed) or imposing gear and vessel restrictions (for example limiting the beam width).

What other measures are being proposed?

In addition to the effort limitation itself, we are looking to introduce a permit condition which will prohibit fishing by a vessel when catch returns from that vessel are more than one month in arrears. This reflects the importance of the catch return data to ensure that the effort does not exceed the available effort and will facilitate the effort management scheme.

When and where do these measures take effect?

After this consultation, we will take into account the views gathered from the industry to finalise the proposed effort limitation scheme. The proposed measures will not come into effect until after the Shrimp Permit Byelaw 2018 has been consented by the Secretary of State for environment, food and rural affairs.

We will communicate with stakeholders to make all aware of the indentation of these measures, as well as those under the Shrimp Permit Byelaw 2018 itself.

What information is available?

The following documents are relevant to this consultation:

- [Shrimp Permit Scheme Policy](#)
- [Shrimp Permit Byelaw 2018: Category One Permit Conditions](#)
- [Habitats regulations assessment of impacts of shrimp fishery on Wash & North Norfolk Coast Special Area of Conservation](#)
- [Shrimp Permit Byelaw 2018: Impact Assessment December 2019](#)

These can be found by clicking the links or from the office on request.

How can I participate?

We welcome your input. Please submit written representations to Eastern IFCA by **noon on the 3rd March 2020** to:

CEO, Eastern Inshore Fisheries & Conservation Authority, Unit 6 North Lynn Business Village, Bergen Way, King's Lynn, Norfolk, PE30 2JG.

Or by email to mail@eastern-ifca.gov.uk

You are welcome to speak to Eastern IFCA staff in person or by telephone (01553) 775321, or by emailing mail@eastern-ifca.gov.uk

What will we do with the information?

The views expressed in this consultation will be considered and taken into account when making a decision on introducing the proposed measures. This consultation is intended to augment the dialogue we have had with stakeholders since 2015 which was used to develop these proposals.

All information will be held in confidence and in accordance with our privacy notice which can be found here - <https://www.eastern-ifca.gov.uk/privacy-notice-eastern-ifca-consultations/>

Frequently asked questions

1. Why not limit the number of permits available from the outset?

We have considered the need to limit permits to fish within this fishery and have had dialogue with stakeholders in this regard since 2015. A key concern raised was that limiting permits could lead to barriers to new entrants and stifle diversification into the fishery as may be required. Inshore fishers in particular rely on the ability to participate in different fisheries during different times.

Given that our assessment has indicated the shrimp fishery is currently operating at levels which do not impact on the conservation objectives of the site, our general approach is to limit our intervention initially, with mechanisms in place to prevent changes which could lead to impacts. We consider it more likely that fishing behaviours would change as a result of limiting the number of permits than would be the case under the proposed effort limitation scheme. In particular, this will avoid fishers fishing solely for the purpose of gaining 'track record'.

The proposals therefore reflect the best balance between protecting the site from the adverse effects of fishing activity but also enabling the fishery to continue as it has always done.

2. Why would increased effort controls relate to 'trips' per month rather than hours or tows?

Ultimately, the measures need to limit the amount of interaction between shrimp fishing gear and the seabed to that which has been the case over the last ten years.

If effort restrictions are required during the year (because effort is higher than expected) then we may limit the number of trips per month each fisher can undertake. The amount of interaction between gear and seabed can vary massively between different trips. Some vessels can operate at sea for several days whilst others may only be capable of operating over a single high tide. In

addition, some vessels have larger fishing gear, meaning each tow represents more effort.

Our approach generally is to maintain the status quo within the fishing fleet because the assessment has concluded that the current fishery is not having an impact. Therefore, if some vessels can undertake longer trips and more tows than others, then we also seek to maintain this. Limiting the number of trips will mean that each fisher, regardless of their business model or vessel capability, will be affected to the same degree if the restrictions come into place. For example, if each fisher loses one trip per month, and they would ordinarily undertake ten trips, all fishers lose 10% of their effort that month.

We will also be monitoring fleet capacity and will ultimately implement further restrictions if fleet capacity generally increases (e.g. if smaller vessels are replaced with larger vessels capable of undertaking additional effort).

3. Why does the 'permit year' start in August?

The 'permit year' is the period within the year shrimp permits are valid for. Shrimp permits expire on the 31st August each year and in order to continue fishing for shrimp, a new permit will be required.

In determining when the most appropriate period, we considered the normal, seasonal pattern of the fishery. Generally, fishing activity starts to increase in August, peaks over winter and drops off during Spring. The changes in activity generally reflect the number of vessels operating (i.e. more vessels over winter) as well as the number of trips.

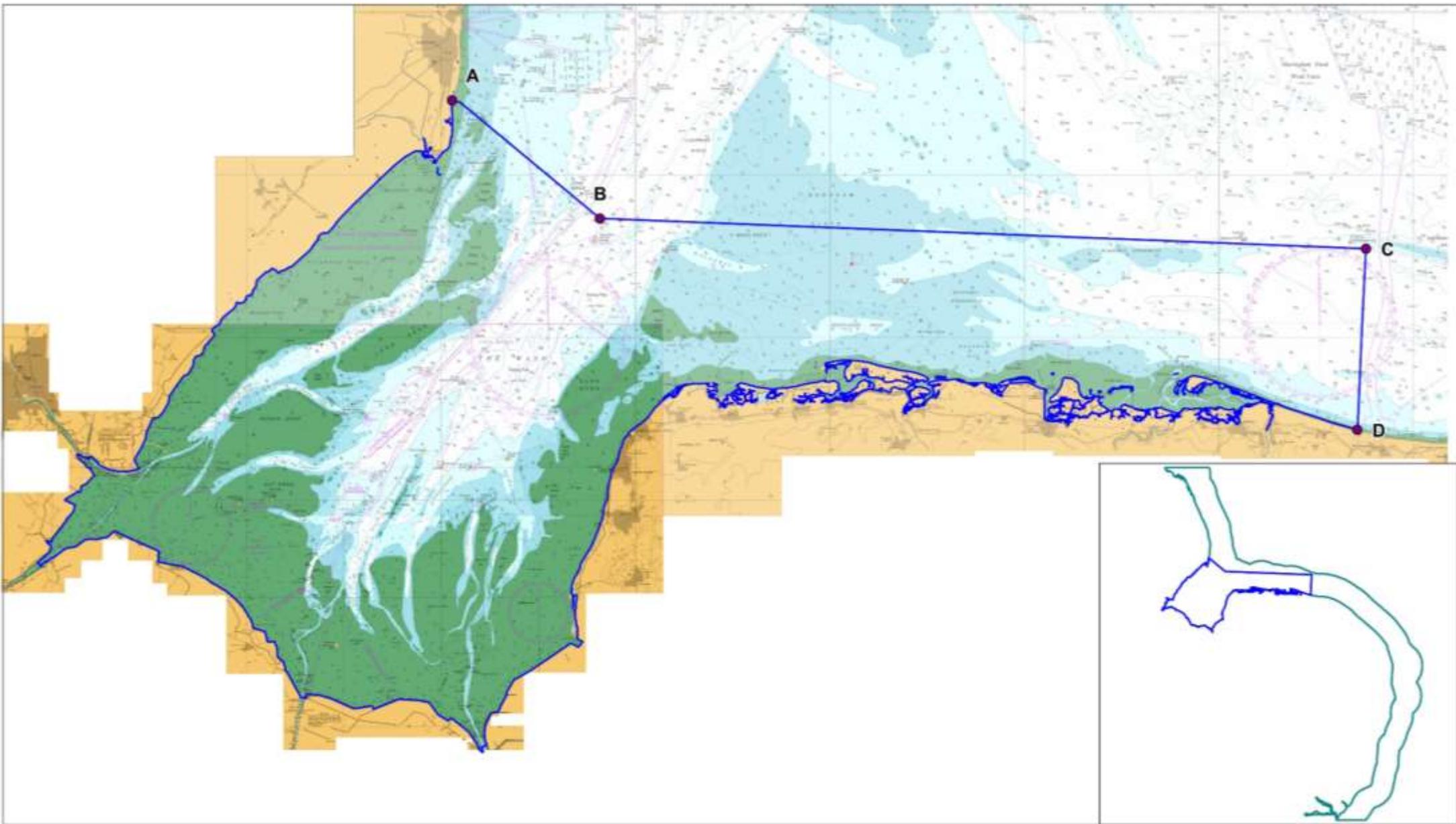
During each year, we will monitor the amount of shrimp fishing effort and, if we consider that effort is likely to exceed the Total Allowable Effort, the fishery may be closed.

By starting the permit year in August, we ensure that the busiest period is undertaken when there is the most available effort. In addition, there will be a slower rate of fishing when there is less effort available which means we can be less precautionary when predicting if the effort will be exhausted. This will reduce the likelihood of the introducing effort restrictions or the fishery closing.

The timing of the 'permit year' is not within the scope of the current consultation as it was considered during the consultation and dialogue for the Shrimp Permit Byelaw 2018.

4. Will this effect the industry led, Marine Stewardship Council Accreditation of the shrimp fishery?

We have taking into account the industry led accreditation of the shrimp fishery when developing these proposals. The proposed measures will not impact on the accreditation and ultimately, the accreditation is not possible without ensuring that the site will not be impacted, which these measures achieve.



The Wash and North Norfolk Coast SAC

- Eastern IFCA - district boundary
- The Wash and North Norfolk Coast Coast SAC boundary
- Co-ordinate points

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