

## Cromer Shoal Chalk Beds Marine Conservation Zone – Information Gathering



**Eastern Inshore Fisheries & Conservation Authority (Eastern IFCA) is undertaking an assessment of potting activity on the Cromer Shoal Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ). We are seeking to understand the level of potting activity within the MCZ.**

**The deadline for responses is midday on 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2020.**

*What is being assessed?*

Eastern IFCA is assessing the potential for pot-based fisheries to impact the seabed habitats in the MCZ. This includes for example crab, lobster and whelk fishing activity. The assessment is looking particularly at how pots and associated ropes and anchors interact with the chalk features of the site. More information about the site can be found on the following website - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/marine-conservation-zones-cromer-shoal-chalk-beds>.

*Why is this information needed?*

Eastern IFCA has limited evidence and data in relation to potting activity within the MCZ. We would like to better understand potting activity within the site. This will allow us to determine how much activity is currently taking place over the different types of chalk seabed.

Where we have a limited evidence base, we are obliged to adopt a precautionary approach, effectively assuming the worse. More information will enable us to accurately determine levels of activity within the site and avoid having to apply a worst-case scenario.

In addition, we are seeking information on the different business models fishing within the site. This is to build an understanding of how important the site is as a fishing ground to those who use it.

*Why is the MCZ so important?*

The site was designated as an MCZ to reflect the uniqueness of its habitats and its importance to ecosystems. The site is characterised by the chalk seabed which is in places raised from the surface to provide complex and important undersea structures. These support a wealth of life including the commercially important species associated with the area, crabs and lobsters.

The chalk seabed is a designated feature in its own right, being considered a feature of geological importance. Damage to the chalk, particularly the raised structures, may have impacts on the wider ecosystems including the commercial fisheries.

More information about the MCZ, including a factsheet, can be found here - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/marine-conservation-zones-cromer-shoal-chalk-beds>

*How will we keep the information safe?*

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/>

*How can I participate?*

We welcome your input. Please use the [questionnaire](#) to provide your responses to the consultation. These should be sent by **12 noon on 3<sup>rd</sup> 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](mailto: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](mailto:mail@eastern-ifca.gov.uk)