

Cromer Shoal Chalk Beds Marine Conservation Zone – Informal Consultation 2019/20



Eastern Inshore Fisheries & Conservation Authority (Eastern IFCA) is undertaking an assessment of potting activity on the Cromer Shoal Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ). For the first stage of this assessment, we are conducting an informal consultation with our stakeholders to gather information to better understand potting locations, levels of potting activity, and what is important to fishing businesses in this area.

Are you a pot fisher working within the Cromer Shoal MCZ? This is an opportunity for you to have a say in the Authority development of management measures.

The deadline for responses is 12pm on 3rd 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 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 Cromer Shoal MCZ can be found [here](#).

How is this being assessed?

The first stage of our assessment is an informal consultation conducted through a questionnaire. Fisheries stakeholders who operate in the area of the MCZ were posted a questionnaire in December 2019.

If you have **not** received your copy of this questionnaire and would like to participate in this consultation please contact our Eastern IFCA office by telephone: 01553 775321, or by email: mail@eastern-ifca.gov.uk, and we will post you a copy of the questionnaire. Alternatively, click [here](#) to download the questionnaire.

Questionnaires are useful for providing specific and detailed information. We recognise that they also require time and effort to complete. If additional support is needed to complete the questionnaire, please do not hesitate to contact us, details provided above.

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 consultation and assessment will allow us to determine how much activity is currently taking place over the different types of chalk seabed. 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.

Successful consultations ensure that all management measures developed by Eastern IFCA are well informed and work with and support our stakeholders. This is to ensure our vision to secure the right balance between social, environmental and economic benefits to ensure healthy seas, sustainable fisheries and a viable industry.

Why is the MCZ so important?

The Cromer Shoal site was announced as an MCZ in 2016 in recognition of the uniqueness of its habitats and its importance to surrounding ecosystems. It is also an important site for North Norfolk coastal history, community, and identity. From a marine science perspective, the MCZ is characterised by the chalk seabed which is, in places, raised from the surface to provide complex and important undersea structures. These structures support a wealth of life including the commercially important species associated with the area: crab and lobster.

The chalk seabed is 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](#).

How will Eastern IFCA keep the information safe?

All information will be held in confidence and in accordance with our privacy notice which can be found [here](#).

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 3rd March 2020**:

By Post

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

By Email

mail@eastern-ifca.gov.uk

Any Questions?

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