

## Closed Areas Byelaw 2020

### Proposed restricted area on Inner Westmark Knock, The Wash Informal Consultation



Eastern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority (Eastern IFCA) is considering a **new restricted area** on the Inner Westmark Knock area in The Wash to protect *Sabellaria spinulosa* reef. The purpose of this informal consultation is to understand what impact this management could have on sea users in this area. This is an opportunity for you to feed into Eastern IFCA's decision-making process.

**If you think this closure could impact you or your work, we would like to hear from you.** Please read through the information below and submit your comments to us.

**The deadline for responses is 12pm on the 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020.**

#### What is being proposed?

Eastern IFCA is proposing to prohibit fishing using bottom towed gear, hand working, bait collection and crab tiling on a part of Inner Westmark Knock, a sandbank The Wash. The area under consideration is shown on the chart below (Figure 1). Please note the actual boundaries of the closure may be smaller and will be finalised taking into account feedback from this consultation.

#### Why is this management needed?

Eastern IFCA is responsible for managing fishing activities in a way that is compatible with conservation targets for protected areas. We have assessed fisheries in our district and identified that we need to close certain areas to certain fishing activities to prevent damage to the most sensitive habitats. This will help achieve the United Kingdom's vision for "clean, healthy, safe, productive and biologically diverse oceans and seas". We have already protected sensitive habitats in The Wash and parts of the north Norfolk coast using our Marine Protected Areas Byelaw. Our existing management includes protection of the feature known as subtidal biogenic reef: *Sabellaria spinulosa* within The Wash and North Norfolk Coast Special Area of Conservation. . We now have evidence for a small area of intertidal *Sabellaria spinulosa* reef. As this habitat is vulnerable to damage or loss by bottom-towed fishing gear, hand working and crab tiling, management is required to prevent these activities from interacting with the feature.

#### When will it take effect?

Eastern IFCA will consider the evidence supporting the closures, conservation advice and information on the likely impact on sea users in the affected area. If approved, the

closures would take effect after a further consultation period and once the Byelaw is signed off by the Secretary of State. We anticipate that this would be in 2021.

### Where will it apply?

The restricted area under consultation is a part of the Inner Westmark Knock, an intertidal sandbank within the Wash and North Norfolk Coast Special Area of Conservation (SAC) (Figure 1; Table 1). Whilst the conservation feature at this location must be protected, the final boundaries of the closed areas could be influenced by your input at this stage.

### How does it affect my activity?

If you fish using bottom-towed gear, hand working, or collect bait in The Wash, you will no longer be able to do so in the proposed restricted area (or any of the existing restricted areas).

### Will the measures be reviewed?

All byelaws introduced are reviewed every six years. Monitoring and control plans will outline Eastern IFCA's approach to reviewing activity levels, compliance with the byelaw and feature condition. Existing closed areas could be re-opened if evidence shows the closures are not required. We would consult stakeholders again if there were any changes to the restricted areas proposed.

Eastern IFCA are committed to balancing socio-economic considerations with environmental protection as far as possible whilst meeting legal conservation duties. We are aware of increasing pressure on fishers and recent declines in opportunities for fishing resulting from the increasing number of spatial restrictions for conservation, fisheries sustainability and offshore development purposes. Eastern IFCA are keen to ensure that management is evidence-based, proportionate and fit-for-purpose.

### Where can I find more information?

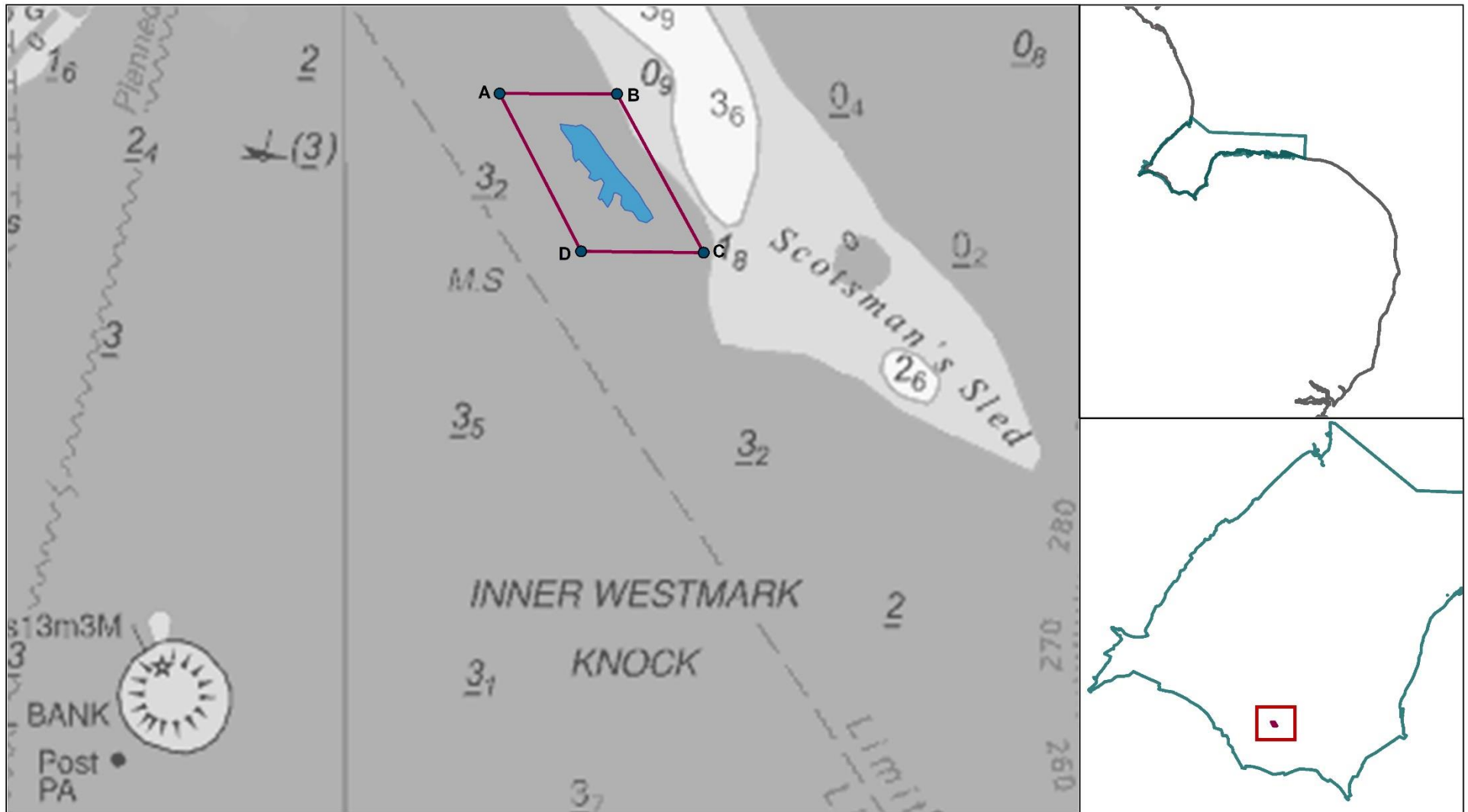
You are welcome to speak to Eastern IFCA staff in person or by telephone (01553) 775321, or by emailing [mail@eastern-ifca.gov.uk](mailto:mail@eastern-ifca.gov.uk)

### How can I comment?

We welcome your input. Please use the questionnaire to provide your responses to the consultation. These should be sent by 12pm on the **23<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)



**Inner Westmark Knock, The Wash**

- Area of conservation interest for Sabellaria spp.
- Management focus area
- The Wash and North Norfolk Coast SAC boundary

Date: 17th February 2020  
 Drawn by: EQ  
 Projection: Lat Long WSG84

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**Figure 1: Proposed restricted area to bottom-towed gear on the Inner Westmark Knock sandbank in The Wash. Please see Table 1 for coordinates of the proposed restricted area.**

**Table 1: Positions of the management focus area (see Figure 1) on the Inner Westmark Knock sandbank in The Wash**

	<b>Latitude</b>		<b>Longitude</b>	
<b>A</b>	52°	51.3593520	0°	15.3552666
<b>B</b>	52°	51.3588642	0°	15.6226734
<b>C</b>	52°	51.1405098	0°	15.8195592
<b>D</b>	52°	51.1424094	0°	15.5406990