

Closed Areas Byelaw 2021 Informal Consultation



Eastern Inshore Fisheries & Conservation Authority (Eastern IFCA) is investigating the need for closures to bottom-towed gear off within the Inner Dowsing, Race Bank and North Ridge Special Area of Conservation (SAC) on the Lincolnshire coast, and investigating the need to restrict netting activity within the Cromer Shoal Chalk Beds Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ) on the north Norfolk coast.

If you are a commercial fisherman working with bottom-towed gear in the SAC, or you fish with nets in the MCZ, we want to hear from you.

We are seeking to better understand what impact management could have on your activity in these areas.

The deadline for responses is midday on 28th June 2021.

What is being proposed?

This consultation covers two proposals. Firstly, Eastern IFCA has identified the need for closures to **bottom-towed gear** (e.g. demersal trawls and dredges) within parts of two new management focus areas off the Lincolnshire Coast, in the Inner Dowsing, Race Bank and North Ridge Special Area of Conservation (SAC). The management mechanism would be the Closed Areas Byelaw 2021.

Secondly, our assessment of fishing activity in the Cromer Shoal Chalk Beds MCZ had led us to consider whether the site, or a specific area within the site, should be closed to **netting activity** (fixed nets, drift nets) If needed, these restrictions would also be introduced under the Closed Areas Byelaw 2021.

Restricted areas that have previously been agreed (under [Eastern IFCA's Marine Protected Areas byelaws](#)) will remain unchanged under the new Closed Areas Byelaw 2021.

Marine Protected Area	Restricted areas (please see attached charts)	Habitats being protected
Inner Dowsing, Race Bank & North Ridge SAC	Chart 1 & 2: restrictions would be introduced in parts of the depicted management focus areas off the Lincolnshire Coast: areas A and B	Subtidal biogenic reef: <i>Sabellaria spinulosa</i>
Cromer Shoal MCZ	Chart 3: Whole MCZ site (area 1), including area 2: the 'rugged chalk' area.	Subtidal chalk

Why is management being considered?

Eastern IFCA must ensure that fisheries operate in a way that is compatible with conservation objectives for marine protected areas (MPAs), such as SACs and MCZs. These objectives relate to the condition and abundance or extent of the animals, plants and habitats highlighted for protection in these sites – ultimately to maintain or recover a healthy abundance and range of marine wildlife across a broad network of marine protected areas.

Ongoing assessment of fisheries in the Eastern IFCA district has identified the need to consider restrictions, within the described areas, to some fishing activities to prevent damage to the most sensitive habitats within MPAs.

Why is Eastern IFCA consulting again on closed areas?

We have conducted several consultations relating to closed areas in recent years, as we have assessed fisheries and developed management across the suite of MPAs in our district. The current proposals are the latest measures being considered. When new management measures are considered, it is important that decisions are properly informed and that stakeholders have the opportunity to contribute their knowledge and views.

What happens after the consultation closes?

We will carefully consider the responses to help ensure we develop appropriate management that meets our conservation duties and our responsibility to support sustainable fisheries. The management proposals will be presented to the Authority, who will be asked to agree the new Closed Areas Byelaw 2021. The byelaw will then be the subject of a formal consultation with stakeholders.

Where can I find more information?

Charts showing the areas that are being considered for management can be found [here](#).

The office is open for reduced hours because of the COVID-19 pandemic, and officers remain at work based at home. Should you need to contact us please use the email or mobile number provided below:

Phone (during office hours): 07385 769305

Email: mail@eastern-ifca.gov.uk

Can I make a comment?

We welcome your input. A copy of the questionnaire is [available here](#) or from the office on request. We acknowledge that consultations can be time consuming to complete and we appreciate your continued engagement.

Please send your questionnaire or written responses by **midday on 28th June 2021** to the email address above, or by post to:

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Business Village, Bergen Way, King's Lynn, Norfolk, PE30 2JG