

MARINE CONSERVATION ZONE (MCZ) STEERING GROUP

Meeting 1	18 th February 2021	2:30pm
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MEETING NOTE

Present	
Julian Gregory (chair)	Eastern IFCA
Georgie Roberts	Natural England
Jon Butler	Eastern IFCA
Hilary Cox	Agents of Change
John Davies	Fisherman
Kevin Jonas	Jonas Seafoods
Nicola Webster	North Norfolk Fishermen's Society
Luke Godwin	Eastern IFCA
Stephen Thompson	Eastern IFCA
Ron Jessop	Eastern IFCA
Judith Stoutt	Eastern IFCA
Samantha Hormbrey	Eastern IFCA
Apologies	
Johnny Seago	Fisherman

Agenda Item	Key points of discussion; decisions and actions
1. Introductions	JG welcomed everyone and attendees introduced themselves.
2. Purpose of Steering Group	<p>2a. Purpose: JG set out the legal context for management of fisheries in Marine Conservation Zones (MCZ) under Marine & Coastal Access Act 2009. GR set out Natural England's responsibility as an advisor to regulators. The purpose and functions of the Steering Group are set out in the Terms of Reference (previously circulated). The Steering Group is effectively a board to organise and oversee the research and management needed to deliver adaptive risk management in the MCZ.</p> <p>2b. Objectives: Members agreed the objectives of the Steering Group are to maintain sustainable fisheries, whilst meeting the conservation objectives for the MCZ, and working collaboratively to achieve this.</p> <p>2c. Adaptive Risk Management: GR explained what "ARM" is, that it is for IFCA to apply as it sees fit, and that there is an expectation to abide by the ARM principles set out by Natural England and JNCC¹.</p> <p>ACTION 1: JS to circulate ARM principles document with meeting notes.</p>

¹ JNCC is Joint Nature Conservation Committee, the UK Government's adviser on nature conservation

<p>3. Terms of Reference</p>	<p>3a. Membership Membership of the Steering Group is set out in the Terms of Reference.</p> <p>3b. Administration It was agreed that EIFCA will chair the Steering Group, organise the meetings, take notes and circulate them. Notes will capture actions and decisions but will not be full reports of meeting discussions.</p> <p>3c. Task & Finish Groups It was agreed that a Task & Finish Group would be set up for Research and a separate one would be set up for Management and that there must be strong links and communication between the two. The Task & Finish Groups would do work set by the Steering Group. The first Research Task & Finish Group is due to meet next week. ACTION 2: RJ to finalise Research Task & Finish Group objectives at the first meeting of the group for approval of the Steering Group ACTION 3: LG to set up Management Task & Finish Group and arrange first meeting. ACTION 4: Management Task & Finish Group to develop objectives for the group for approval of the Steering Group. It was agreed that there will not be a separate Task & Finish Group for Communications, since communications are core.</p> <p>3d. It was agreed communications will be a standing item on the Steering Group agenda, because it is so important. Key communications channels were discussed. It was noted that fishermen’s availability for meetings will be very limited during the fishing season.</p>
<p>4. Research update</p>	<p>RJ noted that the aims and objectives of the Research Task and Finish Group are to obtain evidence to inform the assessment of potting interactions with chalk. EIFCA are in close liaison with Natural England. Discussion is needed over some of the research objectives – this will be held at the Research Task & Finish Group next week. It was agreed the research needs to be focused on getting the information needed to inform management.</p> <p>SH outlined EIFCA’s research to date into the extent of rugged chalk and plans for additional survey work during 2021. JD highlighted fishermen’s concerns that there is a poor understanding of where the feature is, resulting in low confidence in evidence for management. It was agreed that an important task of the Research Task & Finish Group will be to improve our understanding of the extent of rugged</p>

	chalk. It was agreed there is a need to better communicate how EIFCA scrutinises evidence before taking management decisions.
5. Management update	<p>LG gave an overview of EIFCA's current considerations relating to voluntary and regulatory management measures. He emphasised that, following the ARM approach, research would be used to inform developing management. EIFCA's preferred starting point is voluntary measures. A section 157 byelaw ("Emergency byelaw") is under consideration but there are doubts about meeting the required criteria and it is possible that existing Byelaws and agreements with industry may meet initial requirements. There are also concerns that an emergency byelaw could alienate the industry with detrimental effects for all. EIFCA considers that in the longer term a byelaw will be required although voluntary measures (agreed with industry) would be appropriate for management of lost and stored gear.</p> <p>A key initial measure will be the requirement for information on where fishermen fish and how frequently. It was agreed that some kind of returns will be required and that data confidentiality is important and will be maintained. It was noted that recording position is currently not possible for small operators lacking plotters. JG noted that EIFCA would consider funding for low-cost GPS devices to enable position recording. It was noted that reporting fishing location helps EIFCA identify important fishing grounds and protect them wherever possible. This point was welcomed but it was noted that the most important crab fishing ground is the rugged ground (the "shoal") which is the feature needing protection.</p> <p>LG noted it is not known at this point whether spatial and effort restrictions will be required; this will be informed by the research.</p>
6. Any other business	None.
7. Next meeting	Monday 22 nd March 2021. 2:30pm.

Summary of Actions

No.	Action	Owner
1	Share "Adaptive Risk Management – Principles document"	JS
2	Research Task & Finish Group objectives to be finalised at the first meeting of the group for approval of the Steering Group	RJ
3	Set up Management Task & Finish Group	LG
4	Management Task & Finish Group to develop objectives for the group for approval of the Steering Group.	LG