



Eastern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority

Annual Report 2021-22



September 2022
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Eastern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority Report 2021-2022.

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Version	Date	Changes	Officer
First Draft	31/8/2022	Update for the new year	KG
Final Draft	5/9/2022	Final edits	KG

Abbreviations	
Conservation Alliance for Seafood Solutions	CASS
EU Common Fisheries Policy	CFP
Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science	Cefas
Chief Executive Officer	CEO
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs	DEFRA
Eastern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority	Eastern IFCA
Eastern Sea Fisheries Joint Committee	ESFJC
Environment Agency	EA
European Marine Site	EMS
Fishery Patrol Vessel	FPV
Fisheries Improvement Plan	FIP
Habitats Regulations Assessment	HRA
High Level Objective	HLO
Information Communication and Technology	ICT
Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority	IFCA
Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Officer	IFCO
Landings Per Unit Effort	LPUE
Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009	MaCAA 09
Marine Conservation Zone	MCZ
Marine Management Organisation	MMO
Marine Protected Area	MPA
Marine Strategy Framework Directive	MSFD
Maximum Sustainable Yield	MSY
Memorandum of Understanding	MoU
Monthly Shellfish Activity Reports	MSAR
Natural England	NE
New Burdens Funding	NBF
Royal Yachting Association	RYA
Recreational Sea Angling	RSA
Service Level Agreement	SLA
Site of Special Scientific Interest	SSSI
Size of Maturity	SoM

Special Protection Area	SPA
Special Area of Conservation	SAC
Study of The Wash Embayment Environment and Productivity	SWEEP
Tactical Co-ordination Group	TCG
Wash Fishery Order 1992	WFO

Foreword

We are pleased to present the eleventh annual report for the Authority. The report provides an overview of the work undertaken by the Authority during the 2021-22 fiscal year (1st April 2021 to 31st March 2022) to meet its statutory duties under the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 and to address the priorities identified in the Business Plan 2021-2026.

2021-22 saw Eastern IFCA, its officers and our stakeholders transition to a ‘new normal’ post COVID-19, bringing with it challenges as well as opportunities.

Rapidly changing government advice relating to the pandemic during this year saw officers showcasing high levels of flexibility and resilience to ensure that organisational priorities and targets were met, and high standards maintained. As we climbed out of the pandemic, officers transitioned from remote homeworking to a hybrid working model and adapted their ways of working to ensure that ongoing risks to crew safety and operations were managed effectively.

COVID-19 had significantly impacted our capacity for in-person engagement, and we are pleased to have been able to resume face-to-face meetings of the Authority and with our stakeholders during this reporting period.

Considerable progress was made on our top two high priority workstreams – the replacement of the Wash Fishery Order 1992 and the implementation of Adaptive Risk Management (ARM) to managing crab and lobster potting fisheries in Cromer Shoal Chalk Beds MCZ. On the former, significant headway has been made towards developing and refining an Eligibility Policy which will guide how permits are allocated under the new Wash Cockle and Mussel Byelaw 2021, ensuring a smooth transition and business continuity for Wash fishermen reliant on the historic bivalve fisheries. On the latter, we have over the last year, together with our partners, established a robust and collaborative governance structure consisting of a Project Board, two ‘Task & Finish’ Groups (one for Research and Development and another for Management) and a Stakeholder Group run by the Agents of Change to enable the effective delivery of ARM to the site and a high level of stakeholder input into the process.

Following the expiration of legislation permitting public meetings to be carried out using video conference facilities, Authority meetings returned to being held in person with Covid guidelines being applied. Membership of the Authority remained stable throughout the year, Cllr FitzPatrick succeeded Cllr Skinner in appointment as Chair of the Authority in June 2021, and Cllr Vigo di Gallidoro was appointed Vice-Chair. Three new MMO Appointees were welcomed to their first Authority meeting in June 2021 along with two new County Councillors, one each from Norfolk and Suffolk.

The Authority is majority funded through a levy on the County Councils of Suffolk, Norfolk, and Lincolnshire, which is supplemented by New Burdens Funding (NBF) provided by Defra via a grant in aid to the constituent councils. NBF represents approximately 25% of the

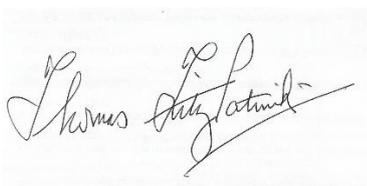
Authority's core funding and is central to the delivery of its mandated outputs. 2021 was due to be the last year that NBF was paid in its existing form, and Defra and the IFCA's worked on the 'co-design' of a replacement. A single year funding settlement for 2021-22 was put in place as a consequence of the Covid-19 pandemic and for 2022-23 the existing funding grant was paid with the addition of funding for specific functions, the detail of which is being finalised at the time of writing.

On a national level, the United Kingdom's exit from the European Union (EU) in January 2021 continues to bring changes in the policy and legislative landscape in which Eastern IFCA operates. The transition from the fisheries management framework of the EU's Common Fisheries Policy to the UK's own Fisheries Act 2020 continues to bring new challenges and opportunities for fisheries management and implications for our work as an IFCA.

National Fisheries Management Plans (FMPs) will have implications for local stock management and the draft Joint Fisheries Statement (JFS) of the UK's fisheries policy authorities which was consulted on only a few months ago will set out high level policies that will necessarily guide us in our work moving forward. As an IFCA we are required to have regard to the Act, the JFS and the FMPs when delivering our statutory duties and together, the Authority and our stakeholders will obviously have a part to play in achieving the government's ambition to deliver world class, sustainable management of our sea fisheries and marine aquaculture across the UK.

More recently, the Environment Act 2021 has passed into UK law, setting the national benchmark for environmental protection and enhancement. This new legislation and the environmental policies which will derive from it will be sure to affect our priorities and their delivery as a statutory fisheries and conservation regulator.

2021-22 has been another busy year for the Authority as we continued to show resilience, adaptability, and drive in meeting our vision to support healthy seas, sustainable fisheries and a viable inshore fishing industry across our district.



Cllr Tom Fitzpatrick
Chair



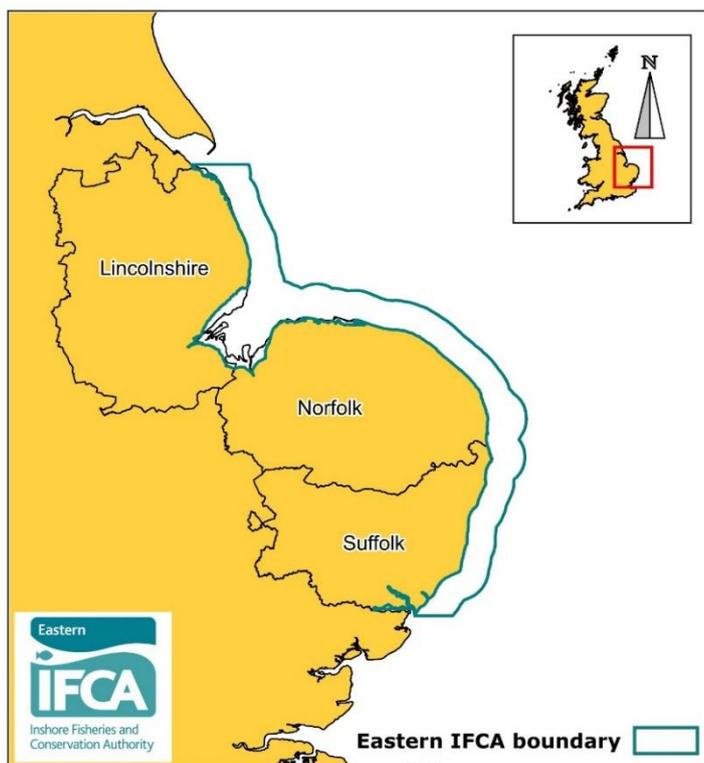
Julian Gregory
Chief Executive Officer

Contents

Foreword:	3
Introduction:	6
1. Who We Are:	7
1.1 The Authority.....	7
a) Meetings and Attendance in 2021-22.....	7
1.2 Our Officers.....	9
2. How We Work:	10
2.1 Our Core Duties under the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009.....	10
2.2 Our Vision and the IFCA High Level Objectives and Success Criteria.....	11
2.3 Wider Legislative and Policy Drivers:.....	12
a) Recent Post-Brexit Developments.....	12
3. Delivery of Eastern IFCA Duties in 2021-22.....	14
3.1 Focus and priorities for 2021-22.....	15
3.2 Business Critical Workstreams.....	25
3.3 Future priorities 2020-21.....	33
4. Delivery against the IFCA Success Criteria: Case Studies.....	35
Success Criterion 1: IFCA's are recognised and heard, balancing the economic needs of the fishery whilst working in partnership and engaging with stakeholders.....	36
Success Criterion 2: IFCA's implement a fair, effective and proportionate enforcement regime.....	38
Success Criterion 3: IFCA's use evidence based and appropriate measures to manage sustainable exploitation of sea fisheries resources and deliver environmental protection within their districts.....	39
Success Criterion 4: IFCA's have appropriate governance in place and staff are trained and professional.	40
Success Criterion 5: <i>IFCA's make the best use of evidence to deliver their objectives</i>	41
5. Risk Management Strategy.....	43
6. Resources, Expenditure, Remuneration, Staffing & Organisational Carbon Footprint.....	50
6.1 Resources.....	50
6.2 Expenditure.....	51
6.3 Remuneration of the Chair, Vice Chair and Chief Executive Officer 2021-2022.....	52
6.4 Staffing.....	52
6.5 Organisational carbon footprint.....	53
References.....	54
APPENDIX 1 – SUCCESS INDICATORS.....	55
APPENDIX 2 – WAYS OF WORKING.....	60
APPENDIX 3 - ENFORCEMENT REPORTING.....	63
APPENDIX 4 – REPORTING ON THE COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT PLAN.....	64
Engagement Plan Actions.....	67

Introduction

Eastern IFCA is a statutory fisheries and conservation regulator responsible for ensuring the sustainable management of fisheries resources and marine conservation in our district, seeking to balance the social and economic benefits of exploiting such resources with the need to protect the marine environment from, or promote its recovery from, the effects of exploitation.



Our district encompasses the counties of Lincolnshire, Norfolk and Suffolk, stretching from Haile Sand Fort in the North to Felixstowe in the South, and extending 6 nautical miles out to sea. The area includes The Wash embayment and various river estuaries including the Stour and Orwell in Suffolk. Almost all of the Eastern IFCA district (96%) is afforded protection through one or more Marine Protected Area (MPA) designations. This includes Special Protection Areas (SPA), Special Conservation Areas (SACs), Ramsar sites, Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSI) and Marine Conservation Zones (MCZ).

Being a publicly funded authority, accountability and transparency are at the core of how we function and publishing an Annual Report is a legislative requirement under the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009. The Annual Report is intended to provide a comprehensive overview to funding authorities (the constituent County Councils and Defra), partner organisations, and our stakeholders of our annual progress towards achieving our statutory duties.

This is Eastern IFCA's eleventh Annual Report. The report is divided into six Parts.

- Part 1 'Who We Are' provides an overview of the Authority and its membership and attendance of meetings during the 2021-22 financial year.
- Part 2 'How We Work' highlights our core duties, vision statement and wider legislative and policy drivers that guide our work.
- Part 3 'Delivery of Eastern IFCA Duties in 2021-22' contains a breakdown of progress made against our annual priorities as outlined in our Business Plan 2021-2026.
- Part 4 'Delivery against the IFCA Success Criteria' contains five case studies which showcase some notable examples of work undertaken during 2021-22 in pursuit of each of the five overarching IFCA Success Criteria.

- Part 5 ‘Risk Management Strategy’ describes how Eastern IFCA manages organisational risk and includes a breakdown of risks and mitigation for 2021-22.
- Part 6 ‘Resources, Expenditure, Remuneration, Staffing and Carbon Footprint’ contains details about our assets, expenses, changes in staffing, details about the remuneration of the CEO, Chair and Vice-Chair of the Authority, as well as a breakdown of our organisational carbon footprint.

1. Who We Are

This Section provides an overview of the Authority, including its membership and attendance for 2021-22.

1.1 The Authority

Eastern IFCA is a statutory committee which meets quarterly to receive reports from the Authority’s officers and to direct officers to conduct work on its behalf to discharge its duties. It is funded by its three constituent County Councils – Lincolnshire, Norfolk and Suffolk – and receives additional ‘New Burden’ funding from Defra. The Authority’s 21 members comprise 7 County Councillors, 3 representatives from the MMO, Natural England and the Environment Agency respectively and 11 individuals appointed by the MMO for their expertise and knowledge of various marine related sectors. The Authority’s members and their attendance at Authority Meetings and Sub-Committee meetings are detailed below.

The Authority remains located at its primary base in King’s Lynn with offices to accommodate staff and a local storage unit for its portable and transportable assets. A satellite office, co-located with MMO offices in the Cefas building in Lowestoft, was opened during 2016 and IFCOs have also been deploying from Well next the Sea Police Station. Vessels (*RV Three Counties*, *FPV Sebastian Terelinck*, *FPV Sea Spray*) are based at moorings at Sutton Bridge, Lowestoft and Wells next the Sea, being deployed according to operational requirements. A fourth vessel, *FPV John Allen*, was sold during the year due to changing operational requirements and the need for a vessel better suited to pot hauling.

a) Meetings and Attendance in 2021-22

A total of four Authority meetings and four Finance and HR Sub-Committee meetings were held during 2021-22, with members expected to attend a minimum of 50% of meetings. Four quarterly Fisheries and Conservation Management Working Group meetings were also held. These take place 6 weeks prior to Authority meetings as an opportunity to informally discuss with and involve members in the development of workstreams, particularly seeking the input from those appointed by the MMO for their relevant expertise.

During 2021-22, in-person Authority and Finance and HR sub-committee meetings were resumed, following a period of hosting these using online conferencing technology (Zoom and Microsoft Teams) because of the restrictions of the COVID-19 pandemic. Fisheries and Conservation Management Working Group (F&CMWG) meetings continued to be held

online. The table below outlines Authority Member attendance at Authority and Sub-Committee meetings.

Member Attendance at Authority Meetings and Sub-Committee Meetings 2021-2022			
Name	% of meetings attended	Authority (4 meetings held)	Sub-Committee
			Finance & HR Sub-Committee (4 meetings held)
Cllr P Coupland	37.5	2	1
Cllr P Skinner	75	3	3
Cllr T Adams	57	3	1 of 3
Cllr M Chenery of Horsbrugh	100	4	4
Cllr T FitzPatrick	100	*4	*4
Cllr E Back	86	3	3 of 3
Cllr T Goldson	100	~	1 of 1
Cllr M Vigo di Gallidoro	37.5	#1	#2
Dr I Hirst	0	0	
Ms G Roberts	50	2	
Mr J Rowley	50	2	
Mr S Bagley	75	3	
Dr S Bolt	75	3	3
Mr I Bowell	75	3	
Mr K Copeland	75	3	
T Davey	0	0	
Mr J Davies	50	2	
Mr P Garnett	50	20	
Mr K Shaul	0	0	
Ms I Smith	50	1	2 of 2
Mr M Warner	0	0	
Mr S Williamson	87.5	4	3

*	Chair	Suffolk County Council	
~	Did not Complete full term	Lincolnshire County Council	MMO/EA/NE Representative
#	Vice Chair	Norfolk County Council	MMO Appointee

Meetings held before 7th May 2021 were carried out using video conferencing facilities in accordance with the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 (Statutory Instrument 2020 no 392). Meetings after 7th May 2021 were carried out at King's Lynn Town Hall which provided ample space for social distancing by both attending Authority Members and members of the public.

NB F&CMWG meetings are not actual sub-committee meetings and therefore do not fall under the same legislation as above nor are they open to the public therefore they have still been held remotely.

The Authority is committed to operating in a transparent manner and as such all Authority and Sub-Committee meetings are open to the public. This remained the case throughout the year with advance notice of the meetings publicised on the Eastern IFCA website. Due to COVID-19 safeguards it was necessary to manage the numbers of members of the public attending, so most meetings were streamed online and the link was publicised with the notice of meetings.

In line with these efforts, agendas continued to be published ten working days ahead of any meeting, with all papers distributed five working days ahead. Agendas, papers and agreed minutes of all Authority meetings are published on the Eastern IFCA website at www.eastern-ifca.gov.uk.



1.2 Our Officers

Delivery of Authority business is undertaken by Eastern IFCA's Officers, operating in four teams - Marine Science (8 Officers), Marine Protection (11 Officers), Support (3 Officers) and the Executive Team (3 Officers).

During 2021-22 officers transitioned from remote homeworking necessitated by the COVID-19 pandemic to a flexible hybrid working model which includes, at minimum, two rostered days in the office. Precautions continued to be taken throughout the year to minimise the risk to staff and operational safety as we learned to live with COVID-19.

2. How We Work:

As a fisheries and conservation regulator, Eastern IFCA operates within a complex legislative and policy environment which shapes and influences our organisational priorities, day-to-day operations and how we go about carrying these out. This section outlines how we work and includes information on our statutory duties, our vision, and wider legislative and policy drivers which influence our work, with a focus on recent changes to the legislative/policy context in which we operate following the United Kingdom's recent withdrawal from the European Union.

2.1 Our Core Duties under the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009

Eastern IFCA was created under Section 150 of the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 (MaCAA) as a successor to the Eastern Sea Fisheries Joint Committee (ESFJC) and was fully vested on 1st April 2011 via Statutory Instrument 2010 No 2189. Our core duties, functions and powers are contained within the provisions of MaCAA. These include:

1. To manage the exploitation of sea fisheries resources in its district and in doing so to:¹
 - a) seek to ensure that the exploitation of sea fisheries resources is carried out in a sustainable way,
 - b) seek to balance the social and economic benefits of exploiting the sea fisheries resources of the district with the need to protect the marine environment from, or promote its recovery from, the effects of such exploitation,
 - c) take any other steps which in the Authority's opinion, are necessary or expedient for the purpose of making a contribution to the achievement of sustainable development, and
 - d) seek to balance the different needs of persons engaged in the exploitation of sea fisheries resources in the district.
2. To seek to ensure that the conservation objectives of any Marine Conservation Zone in the district are furthered.²

MaCAA also requires us to publish an Annual Report to demonstrate progress made towards delivering the statutory duties above.³ This is the eleventh annual report of the Authority.



¹ [Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009, Section 153.](#)

² [Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009, Section 154.](#)

³ [Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009, Section 178.](#)

2.2 Our Vision and the IFCA High Level Objectives and Success Criteria

The Authority's core duties, as set out in MaCAA and summarised above, are captured in the IFCA Vision Statement which is to:

Lead, champion and manage a sustainable marine environment and inshore fisheries, by successfully securing the right balance between social, environmental and economic benefits to ensure healthy seas, sustainable fisheries and a viable industry.

The Vision Statement guides the Authority and its officers in their day-to-day activities. In undertaking our duties pursuant to the Vision Statement, we are also guided by the IFCA High Level Objectives and the Success Criteria and their Indicators which set out how we will achieve the Vision Statement. These were refreshed by the Association of IFCAs and Defra in 2018 to reflect the developing programme of work delivered by IFCAs and to demonstrate our contribution to the delivery of the UK Marine Policy Statement and the 25-year Environment Plan.

High Level Objectives		Success Criteria	
HL01	Achieving a sustainable marine economy	SC1	IFCAs are recognised and heard, balancing the economic needs of the fishery whilst working in partnership and engaging with stakeholders
HL02	Ensuring a strong, healthy and just society	SC2	IFCAs implement a fair, effective and proportionate enforcement regime
HL03	Living within environmental limits	SC3	IFCAs use evidence based and appropriate measures to manage sustainable exploitation of sea fisheries resources and deliver environmental protection within their districts
HL04	Promoting good governance	SC4	IFCAs have appropriate governance in place and staff are trained and professional
HL05	Using sound science responsibly	SC5	IFCAs make the best use of evidence to deliver their objectives

Part 4 of the Annual Report highlights 5 case studies which illustrate how Eastern IFCA delivered against each of the five Success Criteria during 2021-22. Appendix 1 contains a more detailed breakdown of the Indicators for each Success Criterion.

2.3 Wider Legislative and Policy Drivers:

Eastern IFCA's duties are contained within and influenced by various legislative instruments, the primary of these being the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009, as outlined above. However, as a key delivery body in the marine area, the Authority is also influenced by a variety of other drivers including HM Government's Marine Policy Statement, the 25 Year Environment Plan, Defra's Policy Objectives, East Inshore Marine Plan, the IFCA High Level Objectives, the Fisheries Act 2020, and most recently, the Environment Act 2021.

a) Recent Post-Brexit Developments

The Fisheries Act 2020 is the UK's first major domestic fisheries legislation in nearly 40 years and will underpin the national framework for fisheries management going forward. The Environment Act 2021 meanwhile sets the benchmark for environmental protection and enhancement. Together, these instruments establish a new legislative and policy landscape in which Eastern IFCA will operate as a regulator going forward. As such, the implications of these instruments for the work of the Authority merit a brief consideration below.

i) The Fisheries Act 2020

The Fisheries Act 2020 replaced the European Union's Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) following the end of the EU Exit transition period. The Act presents high-level management objectives for the marine sector,⁴ which largely mirror those of the CFP. Subsequent policy developed to achieve these objectives may have a direct impact on the work of the IFCAs in so far as they apply to the inshore area and will consequently inform Eastern IFCA's priorities.

Under the Act, the UK's fisheries policy authorities are required to publish a Joint Fisheries Statement (JFS) which must outline the overarching policies for achieving the high-level management objectives. A draft JFS was consulted on only a few months ago. As a statutory regulator, the Authority will necessarily be guided by the policies contained therein in carrying out its duties in relation to fisheries management and conservation.

The development of Fisheries Management Plans will provide a new tool for stock management which will influence the development of advice for a particular fishery. This will be of importance to the IFCAs with the involvement of our own local fisheries research to feed into the plans' development.

Amendments to MaCAA under the Fisheries Act that will also have relevance for the work of the Authority include extensions to the powers and duties of the MMO. Most notably, the Act confers power on the MMO to make byelaws in England, including the 0-12 nautical mile region, relating to fisheries exploitation and the conservation of the marine ecosystem.

⁴ These objectives, found in [Section 1](#) of the Act, are the sustainability objective, the precautionary objective, the ecosystem objective, the scientific evidence objective, the bycatch objective, the equal access objective, the national benefit objective, and the climate change objectives. They largely reflect the customary principles of fisheries management under the international law of the sea. Subsequent sections of the act provide specific definitions of each objective.

ii) The Environment Act 2021

Like the Fisheries Act, the Environment Act replaces previously applicable EU legislation. The Act enshrines five environmental principles into law which will underpin future government policy.⁵ An Environmental Principles Policy Statement will, similarly to the JFS for fisheries, set out how policy makers are to apply the environmental principles to support environmental protection and enhancement in the UK. The draft Statement which was recently laid before Parliament for parliamentary scrutiny (in May 2022 after the reporting period) will necessarily influence our work moving forward.

There is a legal duty applicable to Ministers when making policy to have due regard to the policy statement. This extends to when ministers are scrutinising documents, strategies and frameworks prepared by public bodies that they are required by statute to approve and would include for example, the scrutiny of Eastern IFCA byelaws.

The Act also requires the government to set at least one long-term target in each of the following areas: air quality, water; biodiversity and resource efficiency and waste reduction. A consultation on the government's targets was launched on 16th March 2022 and ran until 27th June 2022 and included a specific target proposal for biodiversity in the sea.

This proposal seeks to introduce a deadline by which the designated features of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) need to be in favourable condition. The proposed target is for "70% of the designated features in the MPA network to be in favourable condition by 2042, with the remainder in recovering condition, and additional reporting on changes in individual feature condition".⁶ The MPA network included in this target will cover English inshore and offshore Marine Conservation Zones, Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas, so far as they are below mean high water and so includes those MPAs found within Eastern IFCA's district. Such a target would be a key driver in our approach to MPA management going forward. Moreover, it is likely to directly influence Natural England's advice to Eastern IFCA in relation to the achievement of conservation objectives.



⁵ These principles, contained in [Section 17](#) of the Act, are the principle that environmental protection should be integrated into the making of policies, the principle of preventative action to avert environmental damage, the precautionary principle, so far as relating to the environment, the principle that environmental damage should as a priority be rectified at source, and the polluter pays principle. As with the high-level objectives under the Fisheries Act, these principles are established and customary principles of international environmental law.

⁶ Defra (May 2022), [Consultation on Environmental Targets](#), p. 14.

3. Delivery of Eastern IFCA Duties in 2021-22

Eastern IFCA's annual workstreams are organised into three categories reflecting their priority level – high priority, business critical and future workstreams. Workstreams are allocated a priority based on an annual Strategic Assessment which uses best available evidence to identify the highest risk elements of all the fisheries in the district, including risks to fisheries (stock) sustainability, ecosystems and industry viability. At every level, workstreams are undertaken in pursuit of and with regard to achieving our core duties and vision statement (see Section 3 above).

During 2021-22, priorities were dominated by work relating to developing and refining the management frameworks of key fisheries in our district. This has included refining, through extensive stakeholder consultation, the Eligibility Policy under the new Wash Cockle and Mussel Byelaw 2021. This policy will guide how permits will be allocated under the new byelaw to ensure a smooth and transparent transition from the system of the Wash Fishery Order 1992 which has been in place for 30 years and which will expire in January 2023. We have also made significant progress towards the delivery of an Adaptive Risk Management (ARM) approach to managing crab and lobster potting fisheries in Cromer Shoal Chalk Beds MCZ. Most notably, during 2021-22 we established a robust project structure, underpinned by four interconnected bodies to deliver ARM and enable a high level of stakeholder participation and input into our work.

Progress against these workstreams and other priorities for 2021-22 is set out in the next section.



3.1 Focus and priorities for 2021-22

The priorities for Eastern IFCA 2021-22 were identified by the Strategic Assessment 2021, which used best available evidence to identify the highest risk elements of all the fisheries in the district, including risks to fisheries (stock) sustainability, ecosystems and industry viability. Workstreams which are classed as organisational priorities are those which have been identified as crucial to ensuring that Eastern IFCA is able to fulfil its statutory duties and maintain an effective regulatory framework capable of ensuring sustainable fisheries, healthy seas and a viable industry.

The outputs of the Strategic Assessment 2021 were used to inform Eastern IFCA’s focus and priorities for 2021-2022 and our rolling 5-year Business Plan. Together, the Strategic Assessment and 5-year Business Plan are the main tools used by Eastern IFCA to ensure effective and robust long-term organisational planning and as such they reflect priorities that will span multiple years.

The table below reports on progress made in relation to each of our focus areas as reported in our Business Plan 2021-2026 which is available on our website.⁷ Due to the complex nature of these focus areas from a science, regulatory and stakeholder engagement perspective, it is expected that some priorities will roll into following financial years.

Category	Work	Priority	Progress	Comment
1. To ensure that the conservation objectives of Marine Protected Areas in the district are furthered	a) Development of management measures for ‘red-risk’ gear/feature interactions in the Inner Dowsing, Race Bank and North Ridge SAC, and the Haisborough, Hammond and Winterton SAC.	High	Ongoing	The Closed Areas Byelaw (CAB) 2021 is the most recent iteration in the ongoing development of management to protect sensitive habitats located within our district, including measures for ‘red-risk’ gear/feature interactions. It consolidates measures previously implemented under our Marine Protected Areas Byelaw 2018, measures agreed in 2019 and 2021 but not yet implemented and introduces new restricted areas within some parts of five MPAs where bottom towed fishing, and in one new area crab tiling and hand-working, will not be permitted.

⁷ Eastern IFCA Business Plan 2021-2026: https://www.eastern-ifca.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/2021_01_13_Business_Plan_Final_draft.pdf

				<p>The formal consultation on the CAB 2021 is now closed and officers are reviewing the responses to this consultation. Once this review is complete, Eastern IFCA intends to submit the byelaw to Defra for final sign-off. Due to delays in this process partly relating to staffing changes, we anticipate making the submission in Autumn 2022.</p>
	<p>b) Assessment of the impact of fishing activities on the Cromer Shoal Chalk Beds (MCZ) and delivering management measures (if required).</p>	<p>High</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p><u>Non-potting fisheries:</u> Management of bottom-towed fisheries within the MCZ was agreed in 2019 under the MPA byelaw 2019 and in 2021 under the Closed Areas Byelaw (CAB) 2021.</p> <p>During 2020-21 officers undertook further assessment to identify whether artisanal shrimp fishing can continue in the site without hindering its conservation objectives. The assessment concluded that artisanal shrimp fishing at the current level of activity is not hindering the MCZ's conservation objectives but that this fishing activity must be monitored and managed to ensure that it does not change in such a way that the conservation objectives will be hindered. This resulted in the development of the Artisanal Shrimp Management Policy under CAB 2021⁸ which sets out how Eastern IFCA will manage this small-scale, hand-hauled fishery in line with the MCZ's conservation objectives.</p> <p><u>Potting fisheries:</u> Work has been ongoing during 2021-22 to re-assess interactions between potting fisheries and MCZ site</p>

⁸ Artisanal Shrimp Management Policy (Draft), available at: https://www.eastern-ifca.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/2021_11_23_Artisanal_Shrimp_Management_policy_ver3_as_notified.pdf.

			<p>features, following the receipt of formal advice from Natural England in 2020.</p> <p>Since receiving the advice, Eastern IFCA has been taking an Adaptive Risk Management (ARM) approach to managing potting in the MCZ, agreed with Natural England. ARM entails ‘learning by doing’ and adapting based on that learning. It is a flexible, adaptive and responsive approach to the management of MPAs where high levels of uncertainty exist, as is the case in the MCZ. This is because ARM offers a process for developing, trialing or testing multiple effective management options as we progress research and as our understanding of the interactions between ecosystems and human activities is improved.</p> <p>During 2021-22, to enable the delivery of ARM to the site, Eastern IFCA developed and put in place a participatory governance structure to allow a high level of stakeholder engagement and input into our work. This has included the establishment of a Project Board, two Task & Finish Groups (Research & Development and Management) and a Stakeholder Group.⁹ Management priorities have included the development of measures to tackle lost gear which poses a higher risk to rugged chalk features. Alongside the work to re-assess the interactions between potting and the conservation objectives of the MCZ, research priorities for 2021-22 have been to map the extent of the rugged chalk using a BlueROV2 and fishing activity using trackers voluntarily carried by fishermen.</p>
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⁹ More information on this governance structure is available through the dedicated MCZ page on our website: <https://www.eastern-ifca.gov.uk/cromer-shoal-chalk-beds-mcz/>

	c) Development of monitoring and control plans for highest risk MPAs as identified in the Strategic Assessment 2020.	High (for bivalve molluscs, shrimp and prawns)	Ongoing	No progress was made towards publishing bespoke monitoring and control plans during 2021-22 with resource allocated instead to developing the 'red risk' management measures under the Closed Areas Byelaw 2021 and those measures relating to effort monitoring of shrimp fishing in The Wash and North Norfolk Coast SAC (see below). However, the Authority routinely monitor and control fishing activity in MPAs as part of Eastern IFCA's core duties.
	d) Completion of amber/green gear/feature interactions and development of management measures where required.	High	Ongoing	The Authority has developed management for the "highest risk" amber/green gear/feature interactions, i.e. towed demersal fishing on subtidal sediment habitats, in Eastern IFCA MPA Byelaws 2018 and 2019, and the Closed Areas Byelaws 2020 and 2021. Amber/green assessments are to be completed for more recently designated MPAs and management developed if found to be required. The original suite of amber/green assessments is to be reviewed over time, but this work has been put on hold as a result of staff churn and to enable the Authority to focus on developing management for higher risk fishery/protected feature interactions.
	e) Effort Monitoring within the Wash & North Norfolk Coast SAC including implementation of new catch returns system	High		New returns forms were rolled out during 2021-22, with new returns requirements formally coming into effect on 1 January 2022. Returns must now be submitted even where no fishing has occurred, and every day of the year must be accounted for on a return form. Fishermen fishing in the Wash & North Norfolk Coast SAC must submit weekly returns to ensure that the levels of activity do not impact the conservation objectives of the site. Otherwise, return forms must be submitted monthly.
2. To develop	a) Replacement of Several	High	Ongoing	Development of a new Several Order (the Wash Several

management of the fisheries regulated under the WFO 1992 (regulated and several fishery)	Order			Order 2021) to manage aquaculture in the Wash currently managed under Wash Fishery Order 1992 (expiring in January 2023) has been ongoing in 2021-22. Eastern IFCA submitted an application, following consultation (18 th January 2022 to 25 th February 2022) with the fishing industry about our application for a Several Order and on the development of a Fisheries Management Plan which shows how aquaculture in The Wash will be managed, including where 'lays' will be allocated, to whom, as well as restrictions on their use. A Habitats Regulations Assessment of the new Several Order was also completed, to consider interactions between shellfish aquaculture activities and the multiple designated habitats and species in The Wash.
	b) Social/Economic study of Wash Cockle Fishery Viability	High	Ongoing	<p>In late 2020 independent fisheries economics consultant MarFishEco Fisheries Consultants was selected to complete an economic assessment of the cockle fishery in the Wash (in the context of other interdependent fisheries), to better understand the viability and vulnerabilities of the fishery as an important part of the development of new management, including the Eligibility Policy which will govern access to the bivalve fisheries in The Wash under the new Wash Cockle and Mussel Byelaw 2021.</p> <p>Work to complete the economic assessment continued throughout 2021-22. Significant progress was made despite some delays partly relating to industry participation and engagement with the assessment. At the 47th meeting of the Authority on 9th March 2022, MarFishEco provided a summary of their findings, including their initial recommendations. The full report was subsequently</p>

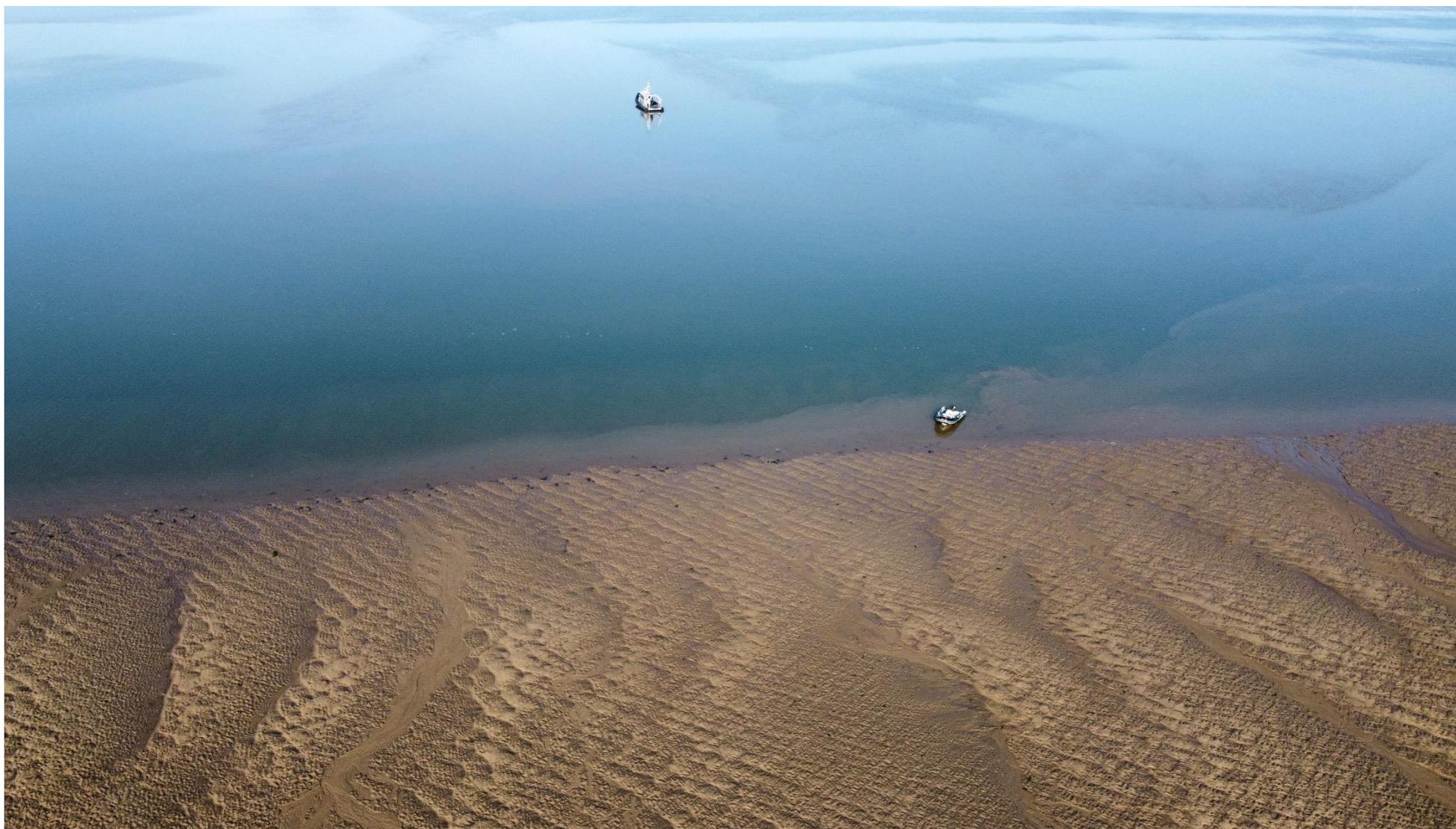
				published in June 2022. ¹⁰
	c) Continuation of the review of WFO policies and development of new policies in relation to access to the fisheries	High	Ongoing	<p>The development and review of the WFO policies was integrated into the work for the replacement of the WFO. The Interim Policies under the WFO were updated on 9th March 2022 to prohibit, save for exceptional circumstances, the transfer of ‘entitlements’ or licences and changes in vessels associated with an ‘entitlement’ or named on a licence. This was done to prevent the circumvention of the transitional provisions of the Eligibility Policy under the Wash Cockle and Mussel Byelaw 2021 (see (e) below) based on speculation.</p> <p>Following delays to the implementation of the new licence fee structure for WFO licence, this has now been implemented, coming into effect on 1st April 2022.</p> <p>The revised WFO regulations were confirmed by the Minister on 1 July 2021.</p> <p>Development of the Eligibility Policy which will manage access to the cockle and mussel fisheries under the new Wash Cockle and Mussel Permitting Byelaw has been ongoing during 2021-22, with significant progress made.</p> <p>The draft Policy covers all aspects of how the permitting system will work, and includes provisions aimed at providing clarity and ensuring a smooth and transparent transition into the new system, recognising the concerns of the industry</p>

¹⁰ [The Wash Economic Assessment Now Available \(9 June 2022\)](#).

				<p>around the replacement of the WFO which has been in place for 30 years. The limitation on the number of permits to enable the long-term sustainability of the fisheries and the viability of the local fishing fleet is set out in the Eligibility Policy also.</p> <p>The draft Policy has been developed through extensive and consistent dialogue with Wash fishermen over the past two years, guided by an overarching aim and objectives previously agreed with the industry, and informed by the recommendations from MarFishEco's economic assessment (see above) and representations received from the legal counsel representing a group of fishermen.</p> <p>An informal consultation ran from 14 September to 12 October 2021. Throughout the process, the concerns and priorities of the industry have been listened to and addressed. The consultation outcome, as is done for all Eastern IFCA consultations, is publicly available on Eastern IFCA's website.¹¹ Moreover, outside of the consultation period, officers have maintained consistent dialogue with individual fishermen, updating the Policy as necessary based on feedback received.</p> <p>The draft Policy is designed explicitly to provide security and enable the continuity of the diverse range of active business models in The Wash, an issue which emerged as an industry priority early in the consultation process.</p>
	d) Replacement of WFO 1992 with a permit byelaw	High	Ongoing	Significant headway has been made on this workstream to replace the management framework of the Wash Fishery

				<p>Order 1992 with a modern permitting system under a new Wash Cockle and Mussel Byelaw 2021. A formal consultation on the byelaw ran from 25th March to 3rd May 2021 resulting in three key changes being made to the byelaw based on stakeholder feedback:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We increased the review period of flexible management measures from 4 to 6 years. Any review of eligibility or access policies before then will only be if it is urgent. • Permit categories will be clearly defined in the byelaw, and they will not be flexible or temporary. We are exploring options for separate permit categories to support the continuation of the current varied business models in The Wash. • Stakeholders were given the opportunity to comment on the policies before the byelaw was formally submitted. <p>The byelaw has now been submitted to MMO Legal for quality assurance before being passed to Defra for Ministerial approval.</p>
3. Industry viability	a) Investigation into mussel and cockle die offs.	High	Ongoing	<p>The Wash intertidal mussel beds have suffered unusually high levels of mortality since 2010, typically among individuals that are only 2 to 3 years old. Initially this was thought to be caused by the high incidence rate of the intestinal parasite, <i>Mytilicola intestinalis</i>, that was known to be present in the mussels, but studies conducted by the Authority and Hull University failed to identify a link between the presence of these parasites and mortalities.</p> <p>In 2020 a new joint project was proposed with Cefas that would investigate the physiology and biochemistry of the mussels in addition to the pathology. Covid-19 restrictions</p>

				<p>meant the project was not able to commence when originally planned but samples were collected and processed in 2021. Cefas detected an 80% prevalence of a previously unidentified <i>haplosporidian</i> species in these samples, which appear to be causing necrosis in gametes. However, because there was no significant difference between the numbers of this organism seen in the test and control sites, the mortalities cannot be directly attributed to it. The samples were also found to contain cleft haemocytes (as would be seen in human leukaemia sufferers), but again, this cannot be directly linked to the mortalities.</p> <p>In addition to studying the mussel die-offs, cockle samples were also collected in the hope of identifying the cause of high “atypical” mortalities that have been occurring in The Wash since 2008. These samples showed a high prevalence of a previously unknown species of <i>Marteila</i> in samples of moribund cockles that weren’t so prevalent in samples of healthy cockles. This provides an indication that this organism could be causal in the die-offs. More samples have been collected to enable Cefas to conduct DNA profiling of the organism in 2022.</p>
4. Obtaining better fisheries data	a) Implementation of Inshore-Vessel Monitoring Systems (I-VMS) for all fisheries, prioritising the Wash Shrimp fishery.	High	Ongoing	<p>The timescale for all vessels under 12m to have a device installed by is by 3rd April 2023.</p> <p>Eastern IFCA continued to actively support the national roll-out of I-VMS by providing information and advice to fishermen in our district.</p> <p>Legislation that will make it a legal requirement for all vessels under 12m in length to have a device installed and transmitting data to the MMO has been delayed while the MMO arranges for additional independent testing of all approved devices against the type approval specification.</p>



Aerial view of The Wash taken using Eastern IFCA drone.

3.2 Business Critical Workstreams

In addition to identifying high priority workstreams, the Strategic Assessment also sets out ‘business critical workstreams’. These are established workstreams which have over time become ‘business as usual’ for Eastern IFCA and the cessation of which has the potential to significantly increase the risk associated with the fisheries and/or areas to which they relate.

One example is the annual cockle stock surveys in The Wash without which the cockle fishery would represent a much greater risk to stock sustainability, industry viability and the protection of designated overwintering birds. An outline of the business-critical work that the Authority undertook as a necessity during 2021-2022 is given below.

Work	Comment
Study of the Wash Embayment, Environment and Productivity (SWEEP)	Following high levels of unexplained cockle mortalities in The Wash in 2008, there were concerns that the mussels present on the Several fishery lays could be having an adverse impact on the food availability for wild stocks. The SWEEP project was instigated in 2010 to monitor the level of Chlorophyll in the water and meat yields of mussels as two proxies for food availability. Initially, the project also had an ambitious objective of evaluating the food carrying capacity of The Wash, but the complexity of this was soon recognised as being beyond EIFCA’s available resources/capability to achieve. The project has continued to monitor the chlorophyll and meat yields, however, using an in-situ sonde deployed on a buoy to collect data continuously and a mobile sonde to take monthly samples from various other sites. Should chlorophyll and meat yields fall below minimum thresholds described in the associated Habitat Regulation Assessment (HRA) for the mussel lays, indicating available food levels were too low to support the wild and farmed shellfish populations, mussels may need to be removed from the lays.
Wash Fishery Order Surveys and Management	The Wash inter-tidal cockle surveys usually involve sampling approximately 1,150 sample stations. Covid-19 restrictions, however, meant it had not been possible to conduct the usual suite of surveys in 2020. Instead, a limited stock assessment had been conducted, using changes seen at 74 sample stations to adjust baseline data from the 2019 survey. While this approach had provided information with sufficient confidence to set a Total Allowable Catch (TAC) and open the 2020 fishery, cockle stocks are too dynamic to confidently use that approach two years consecutively. It was important, therefore, that a comprehensive survey was conducted in 2021. Although measures were not as restrictive as in 2020, Covid-19 still posed a significant risk to crew safety and operations. Some

changes were made to the usual survey routine, therefore, to reduce the risk of the more important cockle beds remaining un-surveyed if the surveys had to be cancelled early due to crew ill-health. These changes included commencing the surveys one week sooner than usual and reducing the overall number of sample stations surveyed to 960. This reduction in stations was accomplished in a manner that would have minimal impacts on the results by re-aligning 450 stations in the south-west area of The Wash that had formally been sampled at a higher resolution to the rest of the beds, and the removal of any stations that had not contained any cockles during the previous ten years. These surveys were completed successfully, from which the total cockle stock was estimated to be 20,153 tonnes, of which 15,848 tonnes had attained a size of 14mm width. While the figure for the total stock was average for the past 20 years, the proportion of larger cockles within the population was much higher than usual. This was due to a combination of two poor spatfalls in 2019 and 2020 producing fewer smaller cockles than usual and a better than usual survival of the predominant 2018 cohort that resulted in more larger cockles surviving. While this high proportion of adult cockles benefited the industry with a relatively large TAC for the fishery, it brought challenges in achieving the TAC, particularly as stocks were thinned. The failure of two consecutive spatfalls was also of concern, as regular spatfalls have been essential in keeping the stocks sustainable when faced with the high mortality rates they have suffered since 2008. The failure of these spatfalls is likely to have serious ramifications on the 2022 fishery and possibly beyond. In an attempt to support the 2022 fishery, two large areas of slower-growing beds were closed to the 2021 fishery in the hope their stocks of 2018 year-class cockles would be retained for another year. While spatial closures are regularly used to protect Year-0 juvenile cockles, protecting adult cockles in this way when they are susceptible to “atypical” mortality is a gamble.

Inter-tidal mussel surveys are conducted in The Wash each autumn. Since 2010, these surveys have found an overall pattern of decline due to high mortalities combined with poor recruitment. This has left the majority of the beds in poor condition and limited opportunities for fisheries. In 2019 the decline resulted in the stocks reaching their lowest level since the 1990s. There had been a recovery in 2020 but not sufficient to reach the 12,000 tonnes Conservation Objective target required to open a fishery. This year’s survey found the recovery had continued, and with the inclusion of a previously un-surveyed bed, stocks were sufficient to open a relaying fishery of 980 tonnes. Six beds were proposed to be opened but there was reticence from the majority of the fishermen, fearing that opening the mussel fishery could have ramifications on opening the 2022 cockle fishery. As both

	<p>stocks contribute towards the food available in the Bird Food Model, used to ensure sufficient shellfish are available to satisfy the over-wintering wader populations, this was a possibility considering cockle stocks were declining. The decision was made, therefore, to delay making a decision on opening this fishery until the results of the 2022 cockle surveys were known.</p>
<p>Habitats Regulations Assessment of WFO fisheries</p>	<p>Eastern IFCA’s WFO cockle and mussel survey data help inform Eastern IFCA’s annual assessments of the impacts of proposed WFO cockle and mussel fisheries on designated conservation sites. These Habitats Regulations Assessments (HRA) consider the impact of the fisheries on protected habitats and species and the overall integrity of the designated site, alone and in combination with other licensed activities. In consultation with Natural England (statutory nature conservation adviser) and with fishery stakeholder input, the Authority agrees updated management measures prior to these fisheries being opened each year, to ensure that the fishing activities do not prevent the conservation targets from being achieved.</p> <p>This work is dependent on evidence relating to fishing activity, site condition (e.g. population status of protected species and extent of protected habitats), and fishing impacts. Within designated sites, regulators are required to apply precautionary management where evidence of activity, condition or fishery impact is poor or inconclusive. The continuation of commercial cockle and mussel fisheries in a conservation site as highly protected as The Wash reflects the good availability of data and the shared understanding of activities and impacts in the site achieved through continual monitoring and dialogue.</p> <p>HRAs were completed in May 2021 (summer 2021 cockle fishery) and March 2022 (spring 2022 mussel relaying fishery). Ongoing partnership working has created a robust relationship between Natural England and the Authority, meaning Natural England recognise the need for the Authority to nimbly manage The Wash cockle and mussel fisheries in short timescales. Natural England have therefore put processes in place to enable them to provide formal advice (feedback on HRAs) for the Authority’s cockle and mussel HRAs within much shorter timescales than their standard service level agreement timelines.</p>
<p>Shrimp Fishery Management and MSC accreditation</p>	<p>MSC Accreditation The Wash brown shrimp fishery is a nationally significant fishery which accounts for 95% of the brown shrimp fished in UK waters. The fishery received MSC accreditation in January 2020. Management</p>

measures include a Code of Best Practice which sets out industry led and agreed standards for responsible fishing practices,¹¹ and a Management Plan which sets out the overall management framework for the fishery and the specific measures for managing stocks and environmental interactions.¹² If MSC accreditation requirements are adhered to, it is expected that good fisheries performance will be maintained and the requirements on Eastern IFCA to step in with regulatory measures may be reduced. Eastern IFCA has an agreed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Wash fishing industry which details tasks and responsibilities that each Party needs to conduct for the MSC accreditation to be maintained. These include a commitment from the Authority to inspect nets and fishing gear used in the fishery, and to monitor where the fishing activities are occurring with respect to sensitive seabed features. COVID-19 restrictions had limited our capability to conduct the full range of inspections during the last reporting period and we are pleased to have resumed inspections as usual during 2021-22.

Effort monitoring

New returns forms were rolled out during the reporting period. Under the new requirements which formally came into effect on 1st January 2022, returns must be submitted even where no fishing has occurred, and every day of the year must be accounted for on a return form. Fishermen fishing in the Wash and North Norfolk Coast must submit weekly returns. Otherwise, return forms must be submitted monthly. The new returns system enables Eastern IFCA to more effectively monitor the level of fishing activity within the Wash and North Norfolk Coast SAC to ensure that the levels of activity do not impact the conservation objectives of the site.

The national roll-out of I-VMS has continued over the last year, with MMO timescales being for all inshore vessels under 12 metres in length operating in English waters to have a device installed by the first half of 2023. We have also identified that most VMS+ devices (which are required for all fishing vessels of overall length 12 metres or more) are capable of reporting at the increased rate of I-VMS devices (every 3 minutes) so there is potential to explore implementing a requirement for increased reporting by vessels operating in the shrimp fishery if necessary. I-VMS and VMS+ data would provide higher spatial resolution data on shrimp fishing activity. However, processing the

¹¹ [Code of Best Practice: Wash Shrimp Fishery.](#)

¹² [The Wash brown Shrimp Management Plan 2020-23.](#)

	<p>quantities of data which would be involved would require the development of a robust processing model.</p> <p>Shrimp Permit Byelaw 2018 Eastern IFCA has assessed the impacts of shrimp fishing on the protected habitats of the Wash and North Norfolk Coast Special Area of Conservation. The assessment has concluded that shrimp fishing needs to be prohibited from certain areas but that for most of the site, shrimp fishing at the levels observed over the last ten years will not have an adverse effect on site integrity. In order to ensure that these levels are not exceeded, an effort limitation scheme was identified as necessary. The Shrimp Permit Byelaw 2018 was developed to enable the implementation of necessary technical measures and effort limitations (as required) through a flexible permit scheme. During the reporting period the byelaw was under review by the MMO and Defra. It has subsequently received Ministerial approval.</p>
<p>Risk of conflicts with other marine users and engagement in marine planning</p>	<p>The East Marine Plans were published in 2014 and set out objectives and policies for sustainable development in the southern North Sea. The Marine Management Organisation is the main regulator responsible for licensed activity at sea. Large (infrastructure-scale) developments, such as offshore and onshore energy projects, are permitted through the Planning Inspectorate. Eastern IFCA plays a role in influencing development decisions by providing expert advice on inshore fishery and conservation matters relevant to an application. Input to these consultations is led by the Marine Science team, drawing on expertise of Marine Protection officers for fishing activity or regulatory considerations. Examples of marine planning cases that Eastern IFCA have been engaged with in 2020/21 include an energy-from-waste plant in Lincolnshire (Boston Alternative Energy Facility), the development of environmental compensatory measures for an offshore wind farm with export cables through inshore Norfolk waters (Hornsea 3 Offshore Wind Farm), and a new trans-North Sea power cable running into Lowestoft (CIRCE North 2).</p> <p>In all engagement with other regulators, Eastern IFCA emphasises the importance of meaningful dialogue between developers/applicants and fishery stakeholders. We engage with the MMO via a newly established Marine Licensing Group for MMO and IFCAs, which meets quarterly to discuss matters relating to the marine licensing process, including engagement considerations. in the southern North Sea. The Marine Management Organisation is the main regulator responsible for licensed activity at sea. Large (infrastructure-scale) developments, such as offshore and onshore</p>

	energy projects, are permitted through the Planning Inspectorate. Eastern IFCA plays a role in influencing development decisions by providing expert advice on inshore fishery and conservation matters relevant to an application.
Enforcement	Enforcement activity is primarily driven through the Compliance Risk Register (an annual assessment of risk of non-compliance) and Tasking and Coordination Group meetings (which also considers intelligence and emerging issues). It is also influenced by the outputs of the Strategic Assessment as this identifies the fisheries most at risk of sustainability issues (and by extension, those potentially most vulnerable to negative impacts through non-compliance). Full reporting on Enforcement activity and outcomes is reported on in Appendix 3.
Complete HRAs in relation to 'unplanned' fisheries	Mussel fisheries (sub-tidal seed mussel fisheries in particular) have the potential to occur throughout the year. Where such a fishery is detected by fishers, officers have a limited amount of time to develop management measures and a HRA for the fishery (particularly in sub-tidal fisheries which are ephemeral). In the event one does occur, the economic benefit of the fishery is relatively high (as mussel is usually used in local aquaculture). <u>No unplanned fisheries took place in 2021-22 so there was no need for such HRAs.</u>
Monitoring of district wide biosecurity risk	A monitoring plan for biosecurity is in place and officers are briefed regarding reporting biosecurity concerns. Furthermore, officers undertake engagement with stakeholders to increase awareness and understanding as appropriate. It is recognised that the spread and control of invasive non-native species is outside of Eastern IFCA's remit and we may be limited to reactionary actions only, but this is not a primary function. Work in relation to ensuring compliance with WFO lease conditions primarily putting on and removing shellfish and education and engagement work is ongoing in relation to biosecurity and the transfer of invasive non-native species. Officers liaise closely with other IFCAs from where seed mussels are sourced to limit the spread of potential non-native species.
Whelk Fisheries Management and Research	Management measures implemented in the whelk fishery due to sustainability concerns include the introduction of permit conditions, a 500-pot limit and a minimum landing size of 55mm. A stock assessment is currently being undertaken involving the use of landings per unit effort (LPUE) and research in relation to size of maturity focusing on areas where there has been a lack of sampling is ongoing. The focus of the size of maturity project is to broaden the scope of the research and obtain voluntary whelk samples.

The risk associated with the Whelk fisheries was identified as being high by the 2015 Strategic Assessment. Subsequent development of management measures has significantly reduced the risk associated with the fishery. Management measures include the establishment of a permit system and new data collection regime which has required a significant resource to administer.

Minimum Landing Sizes (MLS) of 55mm was introduced to ensure species can reach maturity and have a chance to spawn prior to being harvested. Nationwide, whelks are known to mature at different sizes around the country, and these can differ between localised stocklets. Consequently, a project was instigated to study the Size of Maturity (SoM) of whelks from our district to ensure the newly introduced 55mm MLS was appropriate for the district. This has involved measuring and dissecting thousands of whelks, voluntarily provided by fishers from four areas within the district. Research is currently focussing on obtaining and analysing samples from areas in the district that were not sampled during the first phase of the project.

SoM is crucially important in informing an appropriate minimum size and data were analysed from The Wash, Sea Palling, Lowestoft and Southwold areas in phase 1. The results indicated that the minimum size currently in place is less than the size of maturity. The 2020 Whelk Technical Summary Report concluded that whilst there is sufficient data to draw robust conclusions in The Wash, Lowestoft and Sea Palling areas, this is not the case for Southwold, and recommended further sampling is needed in this area to improve the available dataset spatially and temporally. The study was due to conclude within the 2019-20 financial year but is continuing until more robust conclusions can be drawn for the Southwold area.

In addition to studying the size of maturity, the whelk stock assessment is investigating whether the fishery is being targeted sustainably. This is being done via the analysis of returns data to look at trends in landings, effort and Landings Per Unit Effort (LPUE). For stocks that are difficult to physically survey, LPUE can be used as a proxy for stock density. Trends showing declining LPUE values indicate a fishery is being fished unsustainably. However, an issue with how catch caught outside of the district was being recorded in the returns forms was identified in February 2020, invalidating sections of the data. Work is ongoing to fully understand the impact of this will have on the overall results and analyse 2015 – 2021 data knowing these caveats. The same methods will be

	<p>also implemented going forward to continuously monitor LPUE and keep track of current trends in stock.</p> <p>Eastern IFCA are currently reviewing the permit conditions following the initial outputs of the 2021-22 stock assessment and the SoM project. Changes to the minimum landing size and the permitted level of effort are being considered.</p>												
Partnership working	<p>Eastern IFCA contribute to various workstreams that are ongoing with other agencies (primarily the MMO) which provide mitigation to the risk associated with certain fisheries. Primarily these relate to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Under 10m catch recording • Landing Obligation • Inshore Vessel Monitoring Systems <p>Whilst Eastern IFCA do not specifically lead on these projects, they support Eastern IFCA aims, and as such continue to form part of business-critical activities. Further to these primary projects Eastern IFCA also contribute to the following ongoing workstreams:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reporting through the national intelligence project • Evidence and information gathering for partner agencies (where appropriate) 												
Administrative Metrics	<table border="1" data-bbox="734 916 1888 1177"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2" style="background-color: #ADD8E6;">Administrative metrics 2021-2022</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Byelaw derogations (and extensions) issued to facilitate research purposes</td> <td style="text-align: center;">8*</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Freedom of Information/ Environmental Information Regulation requests</td> <td style="text-align: center;">3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Wash Fishery Order 1992 licences issued</td> <td style="text-align: center;">52</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Whelk Permits issued</td> <td style="text-align: center;">23</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Wash Restricted Area permits issued</td> <td style="text-align: center;">0</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>(This count does not include derogations received which were processed but NOT granted, nor derogations processed between April 2021 – March 2022 but not active in that timeframe, the total number including both of these = 13.)</p>	Administrative metrics 2021-2022		Byelaw derogations (and extensions) issued to facilitate research purposes	8*	Freedom of Information/ Environmental Information Regulation requests	3	Wash Fishery Order 1992 licences issued	52	Whelk Permits issued	23	Wash Restricted Area permits issued	0
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Wash Restricted Area permits issued	0												

3.3 Future priorities 2020-21

As a small organisation with a large area to cover, a broad remit and finite resources, Eastern IFCA needs to carefully plan and prioritise annual workstreams and ensure that resources are targeted where they are needed most. As such items that might be worthy of action but are of a lower priority will not be identified for action during a financial year. They may, though, receive attention if resources permit and opportunities or developments present during the year which would enable their undertaking or increase their priority. They could also potentially receive a higher priority rating in subsequent years, subject to the annual Strategic Assessment.

These are referred to as secondary priorities and those identified by the Strategic Assessment 2020 are listed below.

Category	Work	Comment
1. Obtaining better fisheries data	a) Development of relationships with RSA to obtain more fisheries data	No further developments were made during 2021-22 in relation to RSA data collection. However, engagement with RSAs was, like every year, a key priority for the Marine Protection team. Engagement materials were shared by IFCOs on the ground and through social media platforms to raise awareness about minimum landing sizes and rules applicable to recreational fishing activities.
	b) Continue dialogue with MMO and other partner organisations to develop 'joined-up' approach to gathering fisheries data from fishers.	No significant progress was made during 2021 in relation to developing a cross-organisational 'joined-up' approach to gathering fisheries data from fishers. The key focus for Eastern IFCA has been to contribute where required with the facilitation of the national roll-out of I-VMS on all vessels under 12m in length. We have also continued to pursue localised voluntary data gathering. As part of the ARM approach to management of potting activity on the Cromer Shoal, voluntary participation in data collection efforts using vessel trackers to monitor activity are under development with plans to drive uptake among stakeholders.

		Additionally, we have a data sharing agreement between Eastern IFCA and the MMO to facilitate the effective sharing of data where required to inform fisheries management.
	c) Gather information regarding recreational hand gathering.	No progress made in relation to this item
	d) If required re-assess need to deliver 'unregulated netting' in the context of BNA.	No progress made in relation to this item.
	e) Implementation of electronic/app based returns system (to be incorporated with MMO under 10's catch returns if possible.	No progress made in relation to this item.
	f) Investigate requirement/applicability of a netting permit	No progress made in relation to this item.
2. Delivering fisheries management in relation to fisheries in MPAs	a) Review of the Humber estuary cockle byelaw (inherited from North Eastern Sea Fisheries Committee)	No progress made in relation to this item.
3. To ensure that sea fisheries resources are exploited sustainable and in accordance with MSFD requirements	a) Development of management measures in relation to crab and lobster fisheries sustainability	Working with the fishing industry in North Norfolk, Eastern IFCA facilitated the development of a Fisheries Improvement Project (FIP) - a multi-stakeholder initiative aiming to help fisheries work towards sustainability. Progress in the adoption of the FIP by the industry has been slow. However, indications have been given that MCS are considering proposing the FIP for Phase 1 Assessment (pre-assessment).

4. Delivery against the IFCA Success Criteria: Case Studies

In undertaking annual priorities, Eastern IFCA is guided by the IFCA Success Criteria and their Indicators, which set out how we will achieve our core duties and Vision Statement.

Five Success Criteria and twenty-seven Success Indicators have been developed for all ten Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities (IFCAs) within England. These were refreshed by the Association of IFCAs and Defra in 2018 to reflect the developing programme of work delivered by IFCAs and to demonstrate our contribution to the delivery of the UK Marine Policy Statement and the 25-year Environment Plan.

The five case studies below are based on the five overarching Success Criteria we work towards achieving annually and highlight some notable examples from 2021-22. Appendix 1 of this report contains a more detailed breakdown of our progress against each Success Criterion and its associated Indicators.



Success Criterion 1: IFCA's are recognised and heard, balancing the economic needs of the fishery whilst working in partnership and engaging with stakeholders

Replacement of the Wash Fishery Order 1992



Eastern IFCA is the grantee of the Wash Fishery Order 1992 (SI:1992/3038) which enables management of certain bivalve fisheries in The Wash. The Order expires in January of 2023 and the Authority has been working to replace the Order.

This work has prompted strong concerns from fishing industry, particularly those who currently hold a licence to fish under the Order, with the key concern relating to how access to the fishery will be managed in the future and how this will change compared to the Order. It is the access policy which will determine how many permits will be issued and to whom and this appears to be the central matter of interest and concern from stakeholders.

As a reflection of the strong sense of feeling, Eastern IFCA has allocated significant resource to consultation and dialogue with industry on the matter so that their views will inform development of the replacement measures, including the access policy. In addition, an economic assessment was commissioned to explore the viability of the Wash fisheries and to inform this work and enable consideration of balancing the economic needs of the fishery, including in relation to balancing the different needs of persons engaged in fishing.

Consultation included seeking industry views on the Aim and Objectives for the policy which is intended to guide their development and provide stakeholder input at the earliest stage¹³.

During the 2021/22 financial year, evidence was gathered via three structured consultations in addition to general dialogue with industry in between. These consultations all contributed to the development of the byelaw and Policy and responses were considered by the Authority to inform their decisions. This included, for example, agreement by the Authority that the

¹³ <https://www.eastern-ifca.gov.uk/consultation-news-wash-fishery-informal-consultation-report-published/>

policy would, in principle, limit access to the fishery and provide continued access annually which was identified as the preference of industry identified from consultation¹⁴.

Continued dialogue and consultation will be undertaken to further inform this workstream which is intended to conclude in the 2022-23 financial year.



¹⁴ <https://www.eastern-ifca.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/minutes-10th-March-2021.pdf>

Success Criterion 2: IFCA's implement a fair, effective and proportionate enforcement regime

Partnership working and sharing resources with Norfolk Constabulary to achieve shared objectives

In undertaking its regulatory responsibilities, the Authority starts from the position that the majority of the people, organisations and industries engaged in inshore fisheries, whether recreationally or commercially, are compliant with the regulations and controls that affect them.

The Authority works with all parties to ensure that they understand what rules apply to their activity and the rationale that makes regulation necessary. Where people are not aware of the rules that apply to them or they require further guidance to ensure that they are compliant, the Authority assists by providing guidance and/or assistance and will raise awareness, where possible, as a first step to achieving compliance.

We seek to use appropriate compliance and enforcement measures to ensure that the marine environment is not adversely affected by fishing activities. Enforcement activity is intelligence and risk led. Officers' patrols and inspections are directed based on intelligence gathered from a variety of different sources including commercial fishermen, recreational anglers, members of the public and partner organisations.

Officers have been working very closely with Norfolk Constabulary Marine Team based at Wells-next-the-Sea. It was identified that the North Norfolk Coast was exposed to higher levels of marine crime in its small and often difficult to access harbours and beaches. Officers also identified that it would be beneficial for IFCOs to be more visible to both commercial fishermen and recreational anglers who fish from these harbours and along the beaches.

Joint patrols have been carried out with officers focusing on both organisations' priorities. The Marine Team also have access to the RIB 'Sea Spray' making better use of a public asset when it is not being used by Eastern IFCA. The Police report reduced levels of reported crime and increased engagement with stakeholders whilst IFCOs have been able to engage with a greater number of recreational and commercial fishermen.



Success Criterion 3: IFCA's use evidence based and appropriate measures to manage sustainable exploitation of sea fisheries resources and deliver environmental protection within their districts.

Development of an Artisanal Shrimp Management Area to enable the continuation of small-scale artisanal fisheries in line with Marine Protected Area conservation objectives

As part of our duties, Eastern IFCA is required to ensure that fishing activities do not adversely affect the integrity of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) across our district. We are also required to ensure that our management is appropriate, proportionate and balances the needs of protecting the marine environment with the wider social and economic benefits of exploiting the sea fisheries resources.

In some cases, we have implemented restrictions on certain types of fishing activity in parts of MPAs, to protect the most sensitive habitats. The Closed Areas Byelaw (CAB) 2021 is the most recent iteration in our ongoing development of management to protect sensitive habitats located within our district; it includes measures for 'red-risk' gear/feature interactions¹⁵. It consolidates measures previously implemented under our Marine Protected Areas Byelaw 2018, measures agreed in 2019 and 2021 but not yet implemented and introduces new restricted areas within some parts of five MPAs where bottom towed fishing, and in one amended area crab tiling and hand-working, will not be permitted.

Ongoing consultation with our stakeholders on proposed closures highlighted unintended consequences for a small-scale, hand-hauled artisanal shrimp fishery between Mundesley and Happisburgh, within one of the MPAs (Cromer Shoal Chalk Beds MCZ) where closures to bottom-towed gear were required. Working closely with Natural England, we undertook a bespoke assessment to identify whether this fishery was hindering the conservation objectives of the site. This assessment concluded that artisanal shrimp fishing, at the current levels of activity, was not hindering the conservation objectives of the site but that the activity needs to be monitored and managed to ensure that it does not change in such a way that conservation objectives would be hindered.

Through consultation and with advice from Natural England, we developed a specific Artisanal Shrimp Management Policy under CAB 2021 that would enable the continuation of this small-scale local fishery in line with the conservation objectives of the MCZ. This case study successfully demonstrates how, through an evidence-based approach, we can deliver sustainable fisheries exploitation alongside environmental protection.

¹⁵ i.e. priority measures introduced where it is clear that the conservation objectives for a feature or sub-feature will not be achieved, because of its sensitivity to a type of fishing (Defra, 2013), available at:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/345970/REVISED_APPROACH_Policy_and_Delivery.pdf

Success Criterion 4: IFCA's have appropriate governance in place and staff are trained and professional.

Ensuring that staff have access to the right tools and training and are empowered to carry out Eastern IFCA's duties with confidence, competence and in the most effective manner.

Data entry and processing training

As an organisation Eastern IFCA is committed to supporting the personal and professional development of our staff, ensuring high levels of job satisfaction and professional standards. To achieve this, we have in place a robust and supportive supervision structure which allows employees to reflect on achievements and areas of improvement, and managers to understand the needs of their teams so that they can make sure that each member has the right tools and training to carry out their duties with confidence, competence and in the most effective manner.

Through regularly scheduled one-to-one meetings between managers and their team members and meetings between managers, we are able to identify training needs across our organisation. During 2021-22, through supervision, we recognised that some of our internal databases were no longer able to effectively support organisational needs. Feedback received from staff led to a re-evaluation of the effectiveness of our internal systems resulting in the hire of an external provider to develop a bespoke database to enable us to monitor effort in the shrimp fishery as it was not felt that we had the expertise or time to continue to develop databases to the level required.

In order to ensure that staff felt empowered and confident in using the new database, we provided additional Microsoft Excel and Microsoft Access training to bridge the gap in skills and knowledge of these platforms across members of the Marine Science and Support teams who most rely on the use of databases. Training was subsequently rolled out to the wider team, including Projects and Marine Protection, recognising that this would ensure a minimum standard across all levels of the organisation and facilitate increased cross-working and collaboration between colleagues from different departments.

Conflict resolution training

The safety of our officers and stakeholders is of paramount importance. To ensure this, IFCOs are equipped with body cameras and skyguard personal safety devices and all Eastern IFCA vehicles are tracked. This year, to maintain high professional standards when interacting with stakeholders, IFCOs undertook a bespoke refresher course in conflict resolution training to ensure that they are equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to operate within the law should a situation of conflict arise.

Success Criterion 5: *IFCAs make the best use of evidence to deliver their objectives*

Adaptive Risk Management (ARM) approach for managing crab and lobster potting fisheries within Cromer Shoal Chalk Beds MCZ.



Locally important brown crab and European lobster potting fisheries occur within the Cromer Shoal Chalk Beds Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ), typically targeted by fishermen using small (under 10m) beach-launched vessels. When the MCZ was being considered for designation, the generally accepted understanding was that fishing using pots did not have a damaging effect on hard sea beds such as rock. It was therefore suggested at the time that, should the site be designated, there

would be no need for restrictions on commercial potting activity within the site. Subsequent to the site's designation, however, evidence has shown that the pots and ropes used by the fishery do cause physical damage to the raised rugged chalk outcroppings. Natural England' individual incidents of damage are small, collectively their effect hinders the conservation objectives of the MCZ. Recognising the limitations of current data on the scale, frequency and causes of the damage to the chalk by fishing activity, Natural England advised that an Adaptive Risk Management approach for the site would be appropriate, whereby research is conducted alongside appropriate management.

Evidence required to inform the ARM approach includes understanding fishing activities in relation to the sensitive features; understanding which features are sensitive to fishing impacts and mapping their location; determining what impacts the fishing gear has on the features and ultimately, trialling gear adaptations that could be used to reduce identified impacts. The project is very much a collaborative effort with Eastern-IFCA working alongside Natural England, Cefas, a number of universities, commercial fishermen and other stakeholders. Vehicle trackers are being carried aboard a number of vessels on a voluntary basis to map fishing activities, while a BlueROV2 remotely operated vehicle has been purchased to capture underwater video footage. This has been used alongside Cefas's rugosity analysis of previous multibeam data to help map the chalk features, and "flown" along shanks of potting gear to identify and examine any visible damage the gear might be having on the chalk features. Having identified instances where pots have caused "strike" damage to chalk and ground ropes have cut into raised features, gear adaptations have been suggested that will be trialled in 2022 to determine if they help to reduce impacts. These modifications include utilising soft-armouring on pots and using

floats on the ropes to help lift them above the sensitive raised chalk features. Further projects are planned for 2022 that include examining the economic value of the rugged chalk area to the local fishery and studying the natural change that occurs in the MCZ.



5. Risk Management Strategy

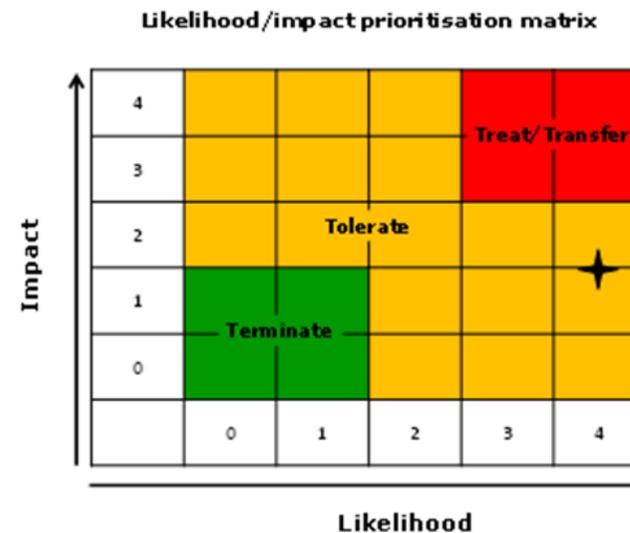
Pages 30-37 of the 2021 – 2026 Business Plan outline the Risk Management Strategy of Eastern IFCA. The risk matrix sets out the magnitude of risks to Eastern IFCA from an organisational viewpoint, incorporating these amongst other reputational and financial risks. The matrix also sets out the likelihood of an identified risk occurring and identifies any mitigation which is in place or to be introduced. Risk is ranked on an arbitrary scale from 0 (low risk - coloured green) to 4 (high risk - coloured red). The average of the combined financial and reputational risk is taken and plotted on to the matrix below, the likelihood of that risk occurring is also plotted and mitigation action is noted. In most cases there are already many actions being undertaken as part of routine working practices to reduce the risks to the Eastern IFCA. In 2020 it was agreed that an update on managing risk would be a standard agenda item at full Authority meetings to ensure that members are fully sighted on progress and any developments.

The four actions that can be applied are:

Treat	Take positive action to mitigate risk.
Tolerate	Acknowledge and actively monitor risk.
Terminate	Risk no longer considered to be material to Eastern IFCA business.
Transfer	Risk is out with Eastern IFCA's ability to treat and is transferred to higher level.

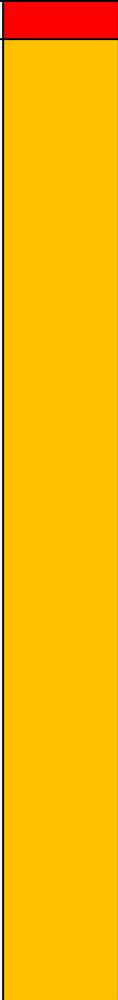
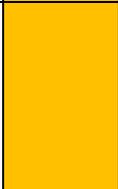
Risk matrix with worked example

Risk A poses a financial threat (2) to the organisation and a reputation threat (1) generating a combined impact level of 1.5. The likelihood of the threat occurring is determined as 4. The resultant risk to Eastern IFCA is therefore plotted using the matrix and is identified as a risk that should be tolerated.



50

Risk Description	Risk	Action	Mitigation	Residual risk
Eastern IFCA fails to secure funding to replace assets		Tolerate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current level of reserves is sufficient to cover replacement of RV Three Counties. • Seek efficiencies and promote cost effectiveness. • Demonstrate value for money. • Advertise/promote Eastern IFCA output and effectiveness to funding authorities through regular engagement with Council leaders and Financial Directors. • Engage with partner agencies to identify alternative funding sources. • Explore asset sharing initiatives. • Agreement in place with funding authorities for capital funding contributions each year. Confirmed at the annual meeting with representatives of the Finance Directors on Tuesday 10th November 2020. 	Potential for any future changes in the funding of County Councils to have an impact upon Eastern IFCA funding.
Impact of EU exit on Eastern IFCA duties and the wider economic environment		Transfer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to monitor EU exit developments (Defra lead on development of the post-EU exit landscape) and potential impacts on our priorities and drivers. • Engage in national fora to help inform and influence developments (e.g. IFCA Chief Officers Group, Association of IFCAs, Regional Fisheries Groups). • Continue “business as usual”. • Prepare for change. • Ensure Eastern IFCA is “match fit”. • Maintain communication with partners. • Officers engaged in future of inshore fisheries management work with Defra and other stakeholders. 	Uncertainty on future arrangements for national fisheries and conservation management post EU Exit due to ongoing development of national-level policies and management measures (e.g. FMPs, Joint Fisheries Statement).

<p>Eastern IFCA fails to maintain relevance amongst partners</p>		<p>Tolerate</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a leadership function. • Be proactive and identify issues early. • Engage with all partners routinely. • Use Business Plan to prioritise and communicate outputs, measure progress/deliver outputs. • Represent community issues to higher authorities. • Effective business planning process in pace. Leading role where appropriate e.g. Op Blake. Proactive approach to raising issues with Defra (e.g. Bass management, proposals for effort management trial). • DSA agreement in place between Eastern IFCA and the MMO to facilitate collaborative working. 	<p>Disparate stakeholder aspirations introduce complexities which may drive perceptions of disengagement or inefficiency.</p> <p>Focus on delivery of MPA protective effect introduces perceptions of bias towards conservation remit from stakeholders. Similarly, perceptions of bias towards fisheries remit can exist among non-fisheries stakeholders.</p> <p>Workload to service MPA protective effect diverts resources from fisheries management tasks.</p> <p>Perceptions of Authority powerlessness in the face of issues affecting the local fleet – e.g. windfarm development, bass management measures, increasing seal populations.</p>
<p>Negative media comment</p>		<p>Tolerate</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actively and regularly engage with all partners including media outlets. • Utilise full potential of social media and web-based information and monitor news and social media sites for relevant posts. • Embed professional standards and practices. 	<p>Disenfranchised stakeholders seek to use the media to introduce doubt as to Eastern IFCA professionalism, utility and effectiveness.</p>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver change efficiently and effectively. • Promote activity. • Assure recognition and understanding through community events. • Multi-channel approach to stakeholder engagement, utilising all resources at our disposal, including liaising with partner organisations to maximise reach. • Routine updating of news items on website. • Active on social media with demonstrable improvements in 'reach'. • Monitoring of ongoing industry expression of dissatisfaction regarding the replacement of the WFO, explanatory information provided where possible and appropriate. • Test new approaches towards engagement e.g. setting up of WhatsApp group chats to facilitate more direct lines of communication between stakeholders and our officers. 	<p>One off event prompts disproportionate media spotlight.</p> <p>Spread of misinformation increased as a result of social media platforms.</p>
<p>Degradation of Marine Protected Areas (MPA) due to fishing activity</p>		<p>Tolerate</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposed fishing activities authorised by Eastern IFCA are assessed per Habitats Regulations. • Eastern IFCA is fully engaged in national fisheries/MPA project, prioritising management of highest risk fisheries in MPAs and implementing new management measures. • Effective monitoring of fishing activity and enforcement of measures. • Adaptive co-management approach to fisheries management – i.e. engagement with fishing and conservation interests in the development of management measures, and appropriate review of measures to respond to changing environmental and socio-economic factors. • Ongoing, close liaison with Natural England regarding all conservation matters. • Review agreed Wash Cockle & Mussel Policies. 	<p>Attempts to broker balanced solution to provide protective effect whilst mitigating impact on local fishing activity are ignored by fishing community.</p> <p>Fishing vessels fail to adhere to management measures including closed areas introduced through new byelaws.</p>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop the use of iVMS as a management tool by the Authority, pending national roll-out and implementing statutory instrument. • Continue to progress research into the impact of fishing activities on MPA features to ensure the Authority has an up-to-date evidence base to inform its management decisions. • MPA management has been a high priority since 2012 with substantial progress made. Current workstreams (e.g. Cromer Shoal MCZ, remaining 'red risk' sites) are a high priority and are being progressed. • Established a robust project structure, including a Project Board, two Task & Finish Groups and a Stakeholder Group to deliver Adaptive Risk Management as agreed with Natural England. 	
Shellfish and fish stocks collapse		Treat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual stock assessments of bivalve stocks in Wash. • Annual review of the level of threat via the Strategic Assessment. • Ability to allocate sufficient resources to monitoring of landings and effective enforcement. • Consultation with industry on possible management measures. • Use Project Inshore Phase 4 output to inform MSC pre-assessment review of fisheries and validate management measures. • Develop stock conservation measures for crab and lobster fisheries through engagement with Cefas and fishing industry • SWEEP research into primary productivity levels within the Wash. • Regular engagement with the industry to discuss specific matters. • Continued research into the cockle mortality events. 	<p>Failure of biosecurity controls introduces disease in the Wash fishery.</p> <p>Unregulated fishing behaviour threatens stock status.</p> <p>Current management measures fall short of required protective effect.</p>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review whelk management measures. • Implement Shrimp Permit Byelaw 2018. • Consider bass management measures, if necessary, in light of EU/UK measures. • Annual surveys of Wash cockle and mussel stocks alongside innovative approach to management of the cockle fishery. • Ongoing workstream to identify cause of mussel mortality. • Closure of cockle fishery in Nov 2019 due to emerging findings of mussel surveys in order to mitigate impact on 2020 cockle fishery. • Innovative approach to surveys enabled the 2020 Wash cockle fishery. • 2020 fishery came to an end after the TAC had been taken. • Management measure implemented in 2020 fishery reduced risk of sustainability issues and delivered a fishery in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic precluding the regular stock assessment. • Work to support industry in establishing a FIP for crab and lobster is complete. Implementation now dependent on industry. 	
Failure to secure data		Tolerate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All computers are password protected. Individuals only have access to the server through their own computer. • Secure wireless internet. • Remote back up of electronic files. • Access to electronic files is restricted. • Up to date virus software installed on all computers. • Important documents secured in safes. • ICT equipment and policies provided by public sector provider – including encrypted laptops/secure governmental email system. 	<p>Malicious release of privileged information.</p> <p>Negligent release of privileged information.</p> <p>Invasive techniques constantly evolving.</p>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Eastern IFCA personnel undergo DPA and cyber security training. • Electronic backup of all Eastern IFCA documents held by ICT provider offsite. • Policies and processes developed to ensure compliance with GDPR. • New policies to manage data security developed through DSAs with partner organisations. 	
New Burdens Funding discontinued		Tolerate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defra and the IFCA's have been working on the 'co-design' of a replacement – concluding that funding is to remain at current levels, with the allocation to each IFCA unchanged. • The replacement was due to form part of SR 2020 but as a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic there will be a single year funding settlement for 2021-22. • Defra included increased IFCA funding in their bid to Treasury. • Finance Directors representatives briefed and understood that in the event that the funding is discontinued there may be a desire to increase levies. 	<p>Uncertainty over future funding costs.</p> <p>Inability to meet obligations.</p>

6. Resources, Expenditure, Renumeration, Staffing & Organisational Carbon Footprint:

6.1 Resources

The following resources belonged to Eastern IFCA on the 31st March 2022.

Vessel name	MCA Work Boat Code	Length	Commissioned	Replacement cost
<i>FPV Sebastian Terelinck</i>	Cat. 2 (60 nm offshore)	11.5m	2015	£420,000
<i>RV Three Counties</i>	Cat. 2 (60 nm offshore)	18m	2002	£1,400,000
<i>FPV Sea Spray</i>	Cat. 4 (up to 20 miles to sea)	6m	2018	£51,000

Vehicle details	Entered service	Replacement date	Replacement cost
Ford Tourneo bus	2016	2022	£18,000
Hyundai Tucson	2021	2026	£18,753
Hyundai Tucson	2021	2026	£18,753
Hyundai Tucson	2021	2026	£18,753
Skoda Yeti 4x4	2014	2021	£18,000
Skoda Yeti 2.0 TDi	2017	2024	£18,000
Skoda Yeti 2.0 TDi	2017	2024	£16,000
Skoda Fabia	2017	2024	£11,000
Skoda Karoq	2020	2027	£23,000
Isuzu DMax Eiger	2015	2022	£20,000

Description	Purchased	Replacement cost
Side scan sonar	2013	£60,000
Underwater camera	2013	£30,000
Video ray	2013	£15,000
Sonar software	2013	£15,000
ROVs	2021	£20,000

In addition to the assets identified above, the Authority leases an office in King's Lynn (a new short-term lease has been renegotiated to afford time for alternative accommodation to be found), moorings at Sutton Bridge for its vessels and a storage facility (close to the offices) in King's Lynn.

6.2 Expenditure

The Authority had a budget of £1,597,996 for 2021-2022. This figure includes £394,145 in New Burdens funding¹⁶ from Defra, £1,079,103 from levies and £145,907 from other sources. Use of New Burden money is not accounted for separately by the Authority due to the accounting and allocation complexities that this would cause.

Following a 25% levy reduction, delivered by 2012-13 and a standstill levy for several years, 2021-22 saw a further 2% inflationary increase to the County Councils portion of the Authority's income. The final outturn for 2021-22 showed an operating surplus of £20,512 over budget (1.3%). Key budget variances were:

1. Savings in salaries due to vacancy management with Eastern IFCA operating below full complement for part of the year amounted to £58,627
2. General expenditure £(3,674) (operational overheads) was fractionally overspent as a result of increased Legal Costs associated with bye law development, partially offset by travel and subsistence savings.
3. Communication and Development, Marine Science and Marine Protection combined overspend amounted to £(778) due mostly to Marine Science overspend £(4,851) offset by £4,073 savings in the other areas
4. Asset operations were underspent by £16,755 which was largely due to deferring Three Counties refit.
5. Income shortfall £(50,418).
6. Asset purchases £(616,020) new Research Vessel stage payment and 3 replacement vehicles along with transfer of WNNMP reserves £(59,104) and WFO reserve spend £(21,735) offset by Asset Replacement receipts of £159,135 and asset sales £149,981. Net cost of "Operation Blake £(15,301) awaiting final claim. These additional items left the final shortfall of £(319,623).

Reserve name	Amount held within reserve @ 31 March 2022
Research	£62,251
IVMS	£30,000
Operational	£150,000
Legal and enforcement	£75,000
ICT	£10,000
Vessel replacement	£1,628,213
Vehicle renewals	£60,000
Fixed Penalty Fine Fund	£22,500
Office Improvements Fund	£10,000
WFO reserve	£88,512
Defra grant	£18,292
Total "IFCA" reserves	£2,154,768

¹⁶ Provided to enable the Authority to meet the additional duties proscribed under the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009

6.3 Remuneration of the Chair, Vice Chair and Chief Executive Officer 2021-2022

The Chair and Vice Chair of the Authority were not remunerated directly by the Authority for their work conducted on behalf of the Authority during 2021-2022 Remuneration of the Chief Executive for the year 2021/22 was in the band £80 – £85,000. Travel, accommodation, and subsistence were reimbursed in accordance with the Authority's policies.

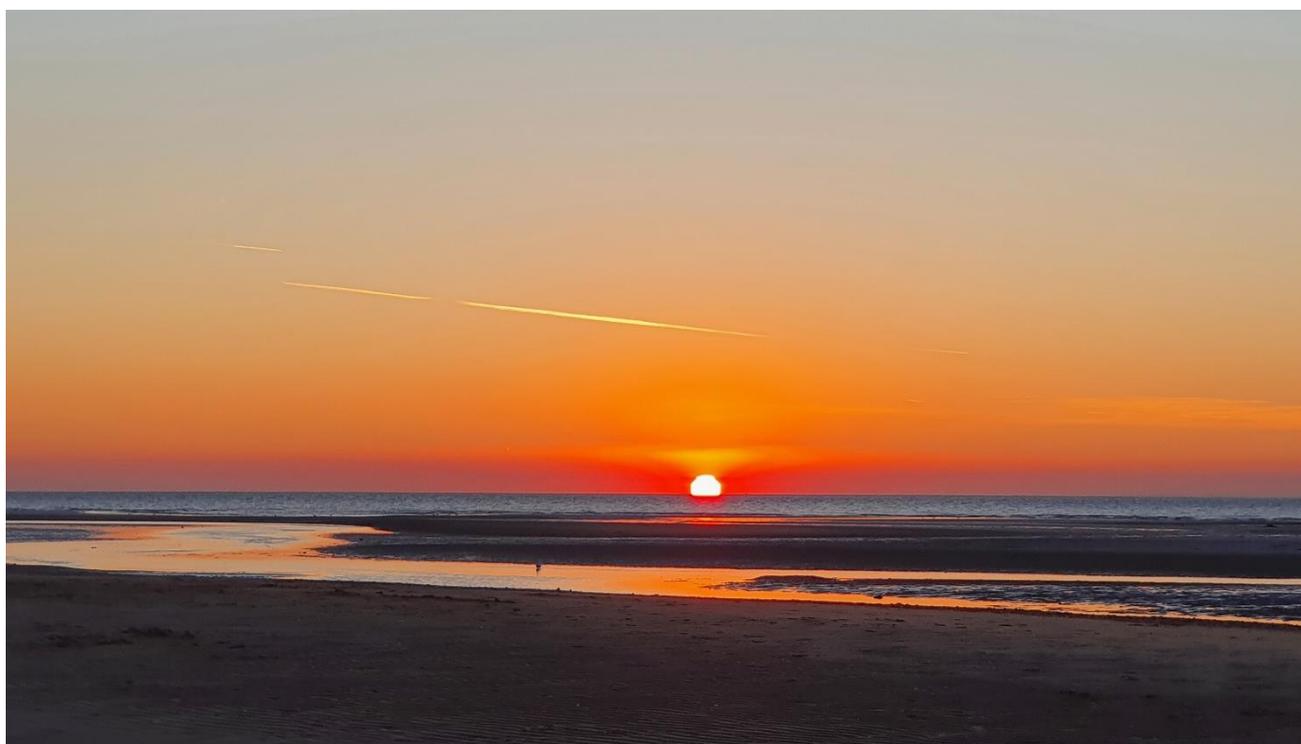
6.4 Staffing

During the year the following changes took place:

- 1 Grade 6 IFCO retired (ill health)
- 2 Grade 5 IFCOs left their post
- 2 MSO Grade 5 left their posts
- 1 Grade 5 IFCO recruited
- 1 Grade 6 IFCO recruited
- 1 MSO Grade 5 recruited
- 1 Grade 5 Project Officer recruited

Outstanding vacancies as at 31st March 2022

- 2 IFCO posts
- 1 Marine Science Officer post



6.5 Organisational carbon footprint

As a local government organisation with environmental protection and promotion as a core function, the Authority is committed to providing information on its environmental performance. In 2008-2009 the Authority's predecessor conducted a baseline environmental audit and identified its carbon footprint. The results of that baseline assessment are compared to the Authority's subsequent years of operation below.

Estimated carbon footprint for the Authority in 2021-2022 compared against a baseline of 2008-2009						
Source	2008-2009	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
Owned road vehicles	24.40 tCO ₂ e	22.58 tCO ₂ e	17.07 tCO ₂ e	18.00 tCO ₂ e	20.70 tCO ₂ e	19.16 tCO ₂ e
Owned ships	197.07 tCO ₂ e	52.26 tCO ₂ e*	31.16 tCO ₂ e*	34.00 tCO ₂ e	32.80 tCO ₂ e	27.80 tCO ₂ e
Electricity	22.59 tCO ₂ e	16.39 tCO ₂ e	13.82 tCO ₂ e	14.00 tCO ₂ e	9.80 tCO ₂ e	8.90 tCO ₂ e
Train travel	-	0.13 tCO ₂ e	0.17 tCO ₂ e	0. tCO ₂ e	0.02 tCO ₂ e	- tCO ₂ e
Flights	-	- tCO ₂ e				
Total tonnesCO₂e	244.71 tCO₂e	91.36 tCO₂e	62.22 tCO₂e	66.50 tCO₂e	63.32 tCO₂e	55.86 tCO₂e

Developed using the Carbon Trust online carbon footprint calculator



References

This report has been developed considering and with reference to the following documents:

Legislation

The Environment Act 2021, c. 30. available at:

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2021/30/contents/enacted>

The Fisheries Act 2020, c.22. available at:

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2020/22/contents/enacted>

Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009, c.23 available at:

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2009/23/contents>

Eastern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Order (SI 2010/2996). available at:

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2010/2189/contents/made>

Guidance

CASS (2019) Guidelines for supporting Fishery Improvement Projects. Conservation Alliance for Seafood Solutions.

Defra (2010) Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities: Vision, Success Criteria and High Level Objectives. Defra. London.

Defra (2011) Guidance to Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities on Annual Planning and Reporting Requirements under s.177 and s.178 of the Marine and Coastal Access Act. Defra. London.

Defra (2011) Guidance to Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities on the establishment of a common enforcement framework. Defra. London.

Defra(2011) Guidance to Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities on evidence-based marine management. Defra. London.

Defra (2011) Guidance to Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities on monitoring and evaluation and measuring performance. Defra. London.

Defra (2011) Guidance to Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities on their contribution to the achievement of sustainable development

Defra (2013) Revised Approach to The Management of Commercial Fisheries in European Marine Sites – Overarching Policy and Delivery Document, available at:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/345970/REVISED_APPROACH_Policy_and_Delivery.pdf

Eastern IFCA (2020), Eastern IFCA Business plan 2021-2026 available at:

https://www.eastern-ifca.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/2021_01_13_Business_Plan_Final_draft.pdf

APPENDIX 1 – SUCCESS INDICATORS

Success Indicator	Progress	
Success Criterion 1: IFCAs are recognised and heard, balancing the economic needs of the fishery whilst working in partnership and engaging with stakeholders		
SC1A: The IFCA will maintain a database of stakeholder contacts that will have been reviewed and updated by 31 st March each year.	Ongoing	Eastern IFCA holds stakeholder databases which are reviewed on an <i>ad hoc</i> basis throughout the year. Privacy policies are in effect and reviews of existing data to remain compliant with General Data Protection Regulations is ongoing. All staff undertake training on data protection and cyber security.
SC1B: The IFCA will have completed a review of its communication strategy and implementation plan by 31 st March each year.	Complete	Communication and Engagement report appended to this report (Appendix 4).
SC1C: The IFCA will have reviewed its website by the last working day of each month.	Complete	'News' Section of the website is regularly updated. Eastern IFCA news and information from partner organisations posted in the news area by request.
SC1D: The IFCA will have reviewed its website and ensured it meets the objectives of its communication strategy, by 31 st March each year.	Ongoing	The website is under continual review and development.
SC1E: The IFCA will have reviewed all of its Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) by 31 st March each year. There will be a clear plan in place to update MoUs where necessary, to an agreed timescale.	Not Complete	We have not been able to comprehensively review established MoUs this financial year, but collaborative working arrangements are working well and arrangements are subject to continuous review throughout the year as part of normal organisational planning. Annual reviews of all MoU are considered unnecessary, and they are reviewed on an 'as required' basis. An existing MoU between Norfolk Constabulary and EIFCA was reviewed and formally agreed after the reporting period.
SC1F: By 31 st March each year, the IFCA will have participated appropriately, proportionately and at the right level of delegation, in regional	Complete	Head of Operations attended NIMEG meetings during 2021-22. Marine Science officers attended TAG and the CEO attended Chief Officers Group and regional fisheries groups. Officers participated in a range of other

and national fisheries and conservation activity identified in the annual plan.		regional and national groups to ensure Eastern IFCA are represented at an appropriate level.
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Success Criterion 2: IFCA implement a fair, effective and proportionate enforcement regime		
SC2A: The IFCA will ensure its enforcement risk register and strategy are published and available on its website from the 1 st April each year.	Complete	Eastern IFCA's 'Enforcement Policy' and 'Regulation and Compliance Strategy', which cover the organisational approach to risk, compliance, and enforcement respectively, are published on the Eastern IFCA website. These are not updated annually but are reviewed when necessary.
SC2B: The IFCA will demonstrate in its Annual Report how it has worked with other regulators to achieve consistent quality, application, and enforcement of management measures.	Complete	Eastern IFCA coordinates activities in collaboration with partner agencies and the MMO through joint TCGs, and continues to strengthen collaboration with Border Force, Environment agency and the Police force through joint meetings and targeted operations/joint patrols.
SC2C: The IFCA will compile records of enforcement activity in a standard format; provide them to the National Inshore Marine Enforcement Group (NIMEG) and publish them on its website.	Complete	Shore-based and seaborne patrol reporting is established and reported to NIMEG in agreed format.
SC2D: The IFCA will adopt the national Code of Conduct for IFCOs, which will be reviewed annually and published on its website by 1 st April.	Complete	IFCOs adopted national code of conducts and policies published by NIMEG.
SC2E: The Code of Conduct for IFCOs is reflected in work objectives and annual appraisals for <u>all</u> Warranted Officers.	Complete	Annual IFCO Objectives and personal development plans incorporate national code of conducts and NIMEG derived policies.
SC2F: Warranted Officers attain accreditation. All undertake Continuing Professional Development.	Ongoing	Accreditation scheme not fully established due to delays surrounding role changes. New employees (IFCOs) attended accredited training courses, subject to course availability.

Success Criterion 3: IFCA's use evidence based and appropriate measures to manage the sustainable exploitation of sea fisheries resources and deliver marine environmental protection within their districts		
SC3A: The IFCA will record site-specific management considerations for Marine Protected Areas and report progress to the Authority.	Complete	Site-specific Marine Protected Area fisheries assessments and management considerations are reported at all full Authority meetings.
SC3B: The IFCA will publish data analysis and evidence supporting new management measures, on its website.	Complete	Scientific reports detailing Eastern IFCA research activities are published on the website. These include stock assessment reports from the annual WFO cockle and mussel surveys, crab and lobster stock assessments and results from habitat mapping surveys.
SC3C: Management information (e.g. sampling and/or survey results) will be collected periodically after new management measures have been implemented, to demonstrate the extent of effectiveness of the intervention.	Ongoing	In addition to supporting forthcoming management decisions, the annual cockle and mussel surveys demonstrate the effectiveness of previous management. Moreover, where regulatory management has been implemented, measures are subject to periodic review in line with the provisions of the associated byelaw.
SC3D: The IFCA will have developed a range of criteria-based management options that are explained to stakeholders through the IFCA website and reviewed by 31 st March each year.	Complete	Eastern IFCA undertakes an annual assessment of fisheries within the district to determine where management measures may be required. The Annual Strategic Assessment is published on the website each year in conjunction with the Business Plan.
SC3E: New IFCA management measures selected for development and implementation are delivered within agreed timescales.	Ongoing	We have faced some setbacks in implementing certain management measures according to the agreed timescales (e.g. Shrimp Permit Byelaw 2018 and Closed Areas Byelaw 2021). This is the result of a number of factors including staff turnover, unforeseen issues identified through stakeholder consultation and revised legal advice provided by MMO and Defra.
SC3F: The IFCA will include shared agreed objectives and actions from Fisheries Management Plans in its own Annual Plan, which will be published by 31 st March each year.	Complete	Eastern IFCA undertakes an annual assessment of fisheries within the district to determine where management measures may be required. The Annual Strategic Assessment is published on the website each year in conjunction with the Business Plan. This takes into account any relevant contextual issues, including changes in the national legislative and policy landscape which would affect our priorities and annual planning.

SC3G: Progress made in relevant Fisheries Management Plan areas, including Maximum Sustainable Yield commitments, will be noted in the IFCA's Annual Report.	Complete	This work is covered in the 'business-as-usual' section of the annual report for key species such as mussels, whelks, crab and lobster.
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Success Criterion 4: IFCA's have appropriate governance in place and staff are trained and professional.		
SC4A: The IFCA will publish a Plan on its website by 31 st March, setting out the main objectives and priorities for the next financial year. A copy will be sent to the Secretary of State.	Complete	All previous annual plans/business plans have been published on the Eastern IFCA website and provided to Defra within the agreed timescales.
SC4B: After the end of each financial year, the IFCA will publish a Report on its website describing its activities, performance, and a summary of audited financial information in that year, by 30 th November. A copy will be sent to the Secretary of State.	Complete	This information is provided in the annual report. All previous annual reports are available on the Eastern IFCA website.
SC4C: IFCA staff will have annual performance management plans in place. Annual appraisals for <u>all</u> staff will have been completed by 31 st May.	Complete	All Eastern IFCA staff are set annual objectives and personal development plans with mid-year reviews.
SC4D: An efficient secretariat of IFCA staff support IFCA Authority meetings which are held quarterly and are quorate. Meeting documentation will meet Standing Orders.	Complete	Eastern IFCA Meetings and Sub-Committee meetings effectively recorded in minutes. All meetings in 2021/22 have been quorate and minutes are published online once confirmed as per Standing Orders.

<p>SC4E: The IFCA will have demonstrated, in its Annual Report, how marine, land and water management mechanisms in the Inshore Fisheries & Conservation District have worked responsively and effectively together.</p>	<p>Complete</p>	<p>As we climbed out of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2021-22, we were able to resume our full range of shore and vessel-based activity and collaborative working arrangements with partner organisations (e.g. Norfolk Constabulary) which had been impacted by public health led restrictions.</p> <p>Eastern IFCA places a strong emphasis on and has maintained collaborative working with stakeholder organisations, Natural England, and aquatic consultants to gather information, share expertise and deliver effective responses to management. Parts 3 and 4 of this report demonstrate in depth and detail how we have worked towards this criterion.</p>
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<p>Success Criterion 5: IFCAs make the best use of evidence to deliver their objectives</p>		
<p>SC5A: The IFCA will demonstrate progress that has been made towards identifying its evidence needs by publishing a research plan each year.</p>	<p>Complete</p>	<p>The Eastern-IFCA 5-Year Business Plan and an annual Strategic Assessment, which prioritises the highest risk elements of all the fisheries in the district, including fisheries sustainability, viability and environmental impacts, is presented with updates at quarterly Authority meetings to record progress with specific work streams. The business plan incorporates research objectives identified in the strategic assessment to ensure that priorities and workstreams are aligned.</p>
<p>SC5B: The IFCA will publish a research report annually that demonstrates how evidence has supported decision making.</p>	<p>Complete</p>	<p>Scientific reports that support our decision making are published on the website.</p>
<p>SC5C: The IFCA's contribution to TAG and progress that has made towards a national evidence needs programme will be recorded in the IFCA's Annual Report.</p>	<p>Complete</p>	<p>The Eastern-IFCA TAG representative chaired the group between July 2016 and November 2017 and has remained an active member thereafter. The group is active in promoting IFCAs at the national level by liaising and working with scientists from other DEFRA-family organisations, enabling IFCAs to contribute towards national evidence gathering projects and to use recognised standards and procedures.</p>

APPENDIX 2 – WAYS OF WORKING

During the year work to progress the following Memorandum of Agreements (MoAs), Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), Partnership Agreement (PA), Informal Agreements (IA), Agreement in Principle (AIP), Service level Agreements (SLA), Information Sharing Agreements (ISAs), contracts (C) and directorships (D) was undertaken. These documents set out agreed ways of working for the Authority to provide clarity for individuals and organisations on their respective roles and responsibilities.

Due to competing priorities, we have not been able to review these documents this reporting period. However, ways of working and collaborative arrangements are subject to continuous review as part of normal organisational planning.

Document	Signatory Organisations	Purpose
MOU	Eastern IFCA and Norfolk Constabulary	Defines the terms for sharing resources and in particular the use of Eastern IFCA's RIB Sea Spray by Norfolk Constabulary's Marine Protection team. *entered into in 2022 but after the reporting period
MoU	Natural England and IFCAs	Defines roles and responsibilities and ways of working.
MoU	Marine Management Organisation and IFCAs	Defines roles and responsibilities and ways of working.
MoU	Environment Agency and IFCAs	Defines roles and responsibilities and ways of working.
MoU	Kent and Essex IFCA	Defines roles and responsibilities in relation to the Stour and Orwell European Marine Site and the Outer Thames Estuaries Special Protected Area.
MoU	North Eastern IFCA	Defines roles and responsibilities in relation to the Humber European Marine Site.
MoU	CEFAS and IFCAs	Defines roles and responsibilities and ways of working.
MoU	Lincolnshire County Council	Transfer of Defra New Burden money to Eastern IFCA.
MoU	The Shrimp Producers Organisation Limited (SPOL)	To support the MSC accreditation of the Brown Shrimp Fishery in The Wash, with commitment to data sharing, monitoring and inspections.
AIP	Norfolk County Council	Transfer of Defra New Burden money to Eastern IFCA.
PA	North Norfolk Commercial Fisheries Liaison Group	Formally a FLAG, the group enable engagement between the District Council,

		Eastern IFCA and fishing industry representatives.
PA	CEFAS, King's Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council Environmental Health Office	Defines working relationship between regarding the collection of water, cockle, mussel samples for shellfish waters classification within the Wash.
MoA	Wash and North Norfolk Marine Partnership	Employment of The Wash and North Norfolk Marine Partnership Project coordinator by Eastern IFCA.
MoA	John Lake Shellfish, Lynn Shellfish, Marine Ecological Services	Delivery of a Brown and Pink Shrimp MSC Pre-Assessment project.
MoA	Natural England	Delivery of baseline monitoring survey data relating to <i>Sabellaria spinulosa</i> within the Wash embayment.
D	Chief Officers of all IFCAs	Directorship responsibilities of Eastern IFCA Chief Officer acting as a Director of the Association of Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities.
DSA	The Marine Management Organisation	Data sharing agreement to establish criteria and conditions for the cross organisational sharing of management relevant fisheries data to aid efficiency.
C	Norfolk County Council	Provision of Internal Audit services.
C	Norfolk County Council	Provision of Health and Safety support.
C	Kings Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council	Provision of ICT infrastructure and support.
C	Andrew Jackson Solicitors	Provision of specialist legal advice (call off contract).
C	Sidekick Digital	Hosting Eastern IFCA Website.
IA	IFCA Technical Advisory Group	Provision of technical advice to IFCA COG.
IA	National Inshore Marine Enforcement Group	Development of good practice, partnership working and advice to COG.
C	CEFAS and Natural England	Charter agreement for the study of Cobble and Boulder Communities.



Borough Council of
**King's Lynn &
West Norfolk**



Eastern IFCA joint working with the Environment Agency, 2021-22.

APPENDIX 3 - ENFORCEMENT REPORTING

Overview

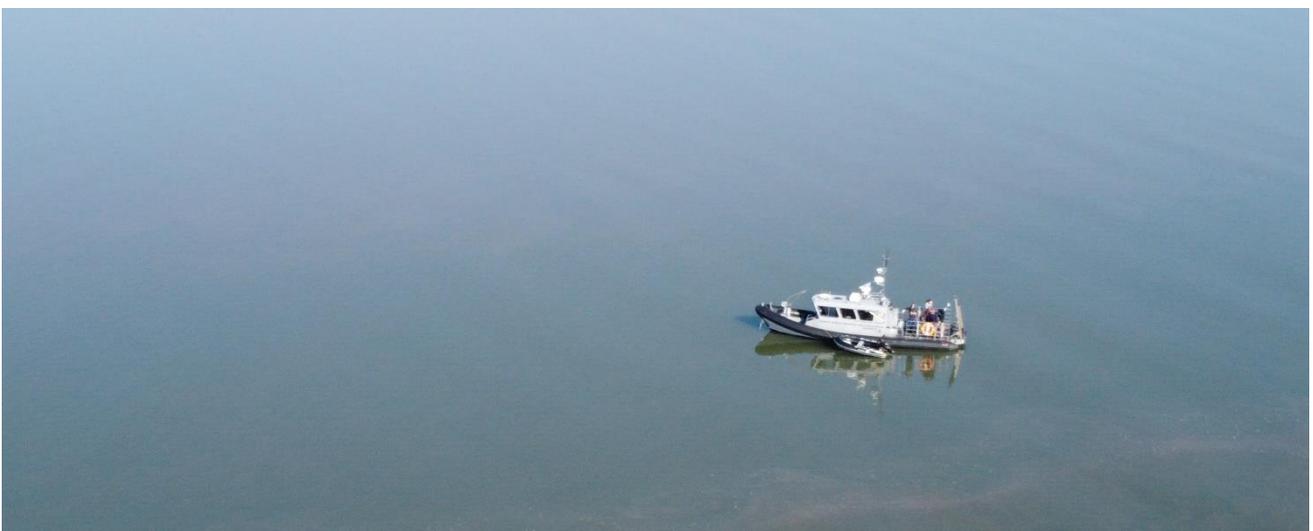
Enforcement planning and actions are risk-based and intelligence led. They are also informed by organisational priorities as set out in Part 3 of this report. Reporting against the targets for 2021-22 is set out in the tables below.

Seaborne Compliance Activity			
Objective	Target Quantity	Quantity achieved	Comment
Sea Patrol Days	50 (primary Enforcement) 40 (secondary enforcement)	59 (primary enforcement) 59 (secondary enforcement) 118	Normal seaborne patrol activity was resumed during 2021-22 following the lifting of COVID-19 restrictions. A total of 118 seaborne patrol days were achieved, with 59 of these having enforcement as a primary purpose.
Monitor EMS closed areas	All visited within year on a risk-based approach	273	

Shore Based Compliance Activity			
Objective	Target Quantity	Quantity achieved	Comment
Port visits	1 per month per port (min)	Primary ports 83% of target All Ports 64% of target	1032 separate port or beach visits were undertaken on a risk-based approach. Staff vacancies and turnover impacted on our coverages as individual IFCOs were left to cover large areas of the district. Primary ports are locations where commercial fishing activity is undertaken however some are very small with only one F/V operating from them, following a risk-based approach means they may not all be visited monthly.
Monitoring EMS closed areas	1 per month (min)	58%	Some EMS sites are not in areas patrolled on a monthly basis such as the North Norfolk Coast and as such are not visited/patrolled. The majority of sites within The Wash and inshore along the North Norfolk Coast are visited monthly. Relocation of the patrol vessel to Wells next the Sea should assist with increased patrols.
IFCOs to engage with the owner/skipper of all vessels which have recently entered the district	100%	100%	All 'new' vessels inspected, and skippers / owners engaged to ensure an understanding of Eastern IFCA byelaws.

Partnership Working			
Objective	Target Quantity	Quantity achieved	Comment

Attendance at MMO Area TCG meeting	100%	75%	Senior IFCO Compliance attends MMO TCG when available.
Joint patrols/inspections/operations with the Marine Management Organisation	24 (min)	29	With the lifting of COVID-19 restrictions, we were able to resume our joint patrols with the MMO at full capacity this year.



APPENDIX 4 – REPORTING ON THE COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT PLAN.

Overview of activity

Eastern IFCA utilises strong ties with stakeholders in all facets of its work. From the development of management measures to the assessment of fishing activities in Marine Protected Areas, the local knowledge and expertise of the community is sought wherever possible.

Opportunities for direct engagement with our stakeholders continued to be impacted by COVID-19 restrictions and precautions in the early part of the reporting period. However, as the year progressed, we were able to resume face-to-face engagements, including in-person stakeholder meetings. The pandemic has led to an overall re-evaluation of our approach to communications, and we have increasingly placed emphasis on adopting a multi-channel approach with the aim of maximising our reach.

As per the Business Plan, the focus for the year was to carry out direct engagement with stakeholders based upon business critical workstreams, primarily in relation to developing management measures, and as such the following consultations were undertaken:

- Code of Best Practice for Potting in Cromer Shoal Chalk Beds MCZ 2021-22: Informal Consultation
- Wash Several Order 2022 Application: Informal Consultation
- Wash Fishery Order 1992 Mussel Relaying Fishery Consultation
- Closed Areas Byelaw 2021: Formal Consultation
- Closed Areas Byelaw 2021: Informal Consultation
- Temporary Closure of Shellfish Fisheries Consultation
- Wash Cockle and Mussel Byelaw 2021, Access Policies: Informal Consultation
- Minimum Landing Size for Cockles (Wash Fishery Order 1992) Consultation

To ensure that these consultations were effective, officers specifically engaged with stakeholders about each of these, with internal briefings to ensure consistency of messages and engagement materials produced to aid education and engagement.

For each of the above consultations, impacted stakeholders were written to or emailed. Consultation questionnaires were made available online and in hardcopy form. The uptake of the online format to meet the needs of different stakeholders has been very successful in generating greater responses to consultation as the burden of response is somewhat lessened on our stakeholders. Indeed, officers are keenly aware of the potential to ‘overload’ stakeholders with consultations no matter how necessary they are. Attempts to mitigate this are made wherever possible, such limiting the length of questionnaires and making to process for response straight forward and easily accessible. Important efforts are made to ensure that the timing is considerate around fishing seasons and to therefore improve the

likely capacity for response. Finally, news items are routinely uploaded to the website and fisheries associations are also contacted.

It is noteworthy that significant opposition to the replacement of the Wash Fishery Order 1992 with a byelaw continued throughout 2021-22, which meant that a substantial amount of resource and effort was committed to stakeholder engagement in this regard.

Social Media

As per the Business Plan, the Community Voice project had identified that stakeholders would value more feedback and information on Eastern IFCA’s work. Accordingly, throughout the year Eastern IFCA uploaded 30 news articles onto the website, in addition to specific pages and updates. Social media was identified as a useful tool for driving this communication and, as such, was used extensively throughout the year. Below is a summary of the key statistics, with a comparison to the figures from previous years.

	Twitter Impressions* (thousands)	Facebook reach* (thousands)	Facebook engagements ** (%)	Overall impressions/reach for Facebook and Twitter combined (thousands)
2017-18	69.9	33.4	2.68	103.3
2018-19	155.2	92	6.32	247.2
2019-20	151,1	79	4.21	230.2
2020-21	89.1	140.6	7.85	229.7
2021-22	47.5	16.8	7.7	64.3

**Impressions/reach: Number of times users saw a social media post.*

***Engagement Rate: The number of engagements (clicks, retweets/shares, replies, follows and likes) divided by the total number of impressions.*

Social media figures for 2021-22 reflect a significant decrease from previous years, most likely impacted by staff turnover. As such, an action has been taken to reevaluate and revise our social media strategy and approach going forward. It is noteworthy nevertheless that the overall following of Eastern IFCA pages continued to increase throughout the year on both platforms which indicates that we have managed to sufficiently maintain social media engagement. Engagement rate is not easily obtained from Twitter’s reporting figures, so this data is not included above.

It should also be noted, particularly regarding Facebook posts, that ‘organic’ (not paid for) growth can be difficult to achieve, but Eastern IFCA has accomplished this. Eastern IFCA do not pay to promote any social media posts, so all figures represent organic growth.

Engagement Plan Actions

Business plan Action	Update
Partnership working	IFCO's carried out joint patrols with partner agencies including the MMO, Environment Agency, Border Force and Police. Marine Science Officers frequently work with other government bodies including the MMO and Natural England, as well as various coastal management boards (Wash and North Norfolk Marine partnership and Suffolk Coastal Forum).
More even spread of IFCO's across the district	Due to staff vacancies, including in the Marine Protection Team, IFCOs were directed to district-based patrols more local to their immediate area. Vacancies did impact on our ability to consistently maintain a presence throughout the district, but significant effort was made to ensure that the district is reasonably covered with patrol activity (as evidenced by the enforcement reporting in Appendix 3).
Talk to people on their own ground	Following the lifting of COVID-19 restrictions this year, we are pleased to have resumed previous levels of in-person engagement with our stakeholders. This has included organising face-to-face meetings with stakeholders on their own ground. Although vacancies in the Marine Protection team had an impact, huge efforts were made to maintain contact with stakeholders across the district.
Maintain and improve a professional and up-to-date website. With regularly updated content (2 new news items or other updates per month)	A total of 30 news items were uploaded during the year.
Social media sites to be regularly updated; use social media posts in conjunction with website updates, to deliver key updates to the community	Regular updates were posted on social media, ensuring a good overall reach to Eastern IFCA stakeholders.
Engagement with key stakeholders around consultations	This year a high number of consultations were undertaken once again. We have increasingly placed an emphasis on a multi-channel approach to communications. This has also been applied in our approach to consultations where a variety of tools are employed to maximise engaged including letters, website news items, social media posts, targeted phone calls, and a mixture of in-person and online meetings. Attempts were also made to share, within a reasonable timeframe, the summarised responses to consultation work and what changes have been made as a result. Additionally, with all consultations, follow up calls/visits (where possible) were made to individuals who may have not involved themselves with initial consultation but may have a view/opinion

	they want to express. Particular progress was made through small meetings with stakeholders in-person and online throughout the year, maintaining direct lines of communication and building relationships to ensure productive and transparent communication.
Establish working groups on key fisheries issues.	Success with working groups that were established towards the end of March 2020 was unfortunately stalled due to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. This year progress has been made in re-establishing contact with stakeholders across the district through the organisation of in-person meetings with officers. Noteworthy for 2021-22 is our establishment of 4 groups with distinct functions to carry forward our Adaptive Risk Management work in Cromer Shoal Chalk Beds MCZ. More information on this can be found in Parts 3 and 4 of this report.
Maintain the stakeholder database	As is required under SC1A above, databases are maintained on an <i>ad-hoc</i> basis throughout the year.
Key engagement messages reflected in officer duties	Engagement priorities were established through the tactical and coordination group meetings. Guidance documents were produced for IFCOs for each engagement priority, following engagement officers routinely logged comments in 'message forms' of which 175 were written and logged during the year.
Review outputs of the Community Voice project to inform and develop how the organisation engages and communicates with stakeholders	A formal review was not carried out during the year; however stakeholder preferences were used to inform engagement at all levels.

Examples of other meetings and workshops attended

Eastern IFCA was still able to attend a variety of events throughout the year where these were hosted online, encompassing the full breadth of the Authority's remit, below is a list that gives a flavour of the events attended.

- Norfolk Coastal Forum
- North Norfolk Commercial fishing forum
- Advisory groups associated with the Wash and North Norfolk Marine Partnership
- Suffolk Coastal Forum
- Suffolk Marine Pioneer
- Southern North Sea managers meeting
- Suffolk Saltmarsh Group
- Humber nature forum
- East of England Plastics coalition
- Agents of Change
- Big Picture Two Benthic Imagery

- Hornsea 3 – Compensatory Measures
- Humber Coastal Conservation Project (with The Wildlife Trust)
- Greater Lincolnshire Nature Partnership