

SUMMARY OF STRATEGIC ASSESSMENT

2023

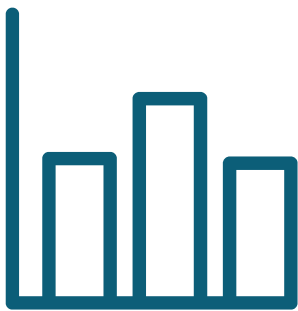


**This document summarises the outputs from the full
strategic assessment which is available at
www.eastern-ifca.gov.uk**

What is the strategic assessment?

PRIORITISATION BASED ON RISK

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. Each year an assessment is carried out using 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.



DATA DRIVEN ASSESSMENT

A range of data sources are analysed to detect trends, identify emerging issues and determine the economic importance of each fishery. This includes information gathered by the Authority and from our partners (such as the Marine Management Organisation).



CONTEXTUAL ASSESSMENT

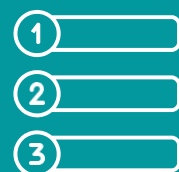
Context is provided to the data driven assessment by considering the legislative and policy drivers to actions including, for example, the presence of Marine Protected Areas and targets set on delivering favorable condition of such.



Detect risk



Identify
workstreams



Assign annual
priorities

Bivalve Molluscs

DATA DRIVEN ASSESSMENT

Cockles are the only species of note. Landed weight for cockles has dropped significantly since 2017.

CONTEXTUAL ASSESSMENT

EVIDENCE BASE

is of high quality:
Low Risk

CURRENT REGULATION

is insufficient. Additional regulation is required to manage Wash cockle and mussel fisheries:
High Risk

ECOSYSTEM IMPACTS

are low and managed in accordance with an established Fisheries Management Plan:
Low Risk

FISHERIES PERFORMANCE

is of concern with die-offs and poor recruitment affecting cockles and mussels:
High Risk



Overall: High Risk

Key species: cockles, mussels

Crustaceans

DATA DRIVEN ASSESSMENT

Crab landed weight stable, prices climbing. Lobster landings are variable, increasing in 2022. Price sharply increased in 2021 and remain high

CONTEXTUAL ASSESSMENT

EVIDENCE BASE

is of a poor quality due to loss of previous MSAR reporting and no access to the replacement system. Adaptive Risk Management efforts may mitigate this:
High risk

CURRENT REGULATION

is insufficient to conclude exploitation is sustainable. A byelaw is being proposed to mitigate the risk within Cromer MCZ, and national Fisheries Management Plans are in development:
High risk

ECOSYSTEM IMPACTS

are usually low with potting fisheries, however due to the activity within the Cromer MCZ risk is higher. ARM efforts and voluntary measures in place to mitigate: **High risk**

FISHERIES PERFORMANCE

shows high levels of landings and stability over time however, Good Environmental Status cannot be evidenced, and concerns exist regarding the use of crabs for bait: **medium risk**



Overall: High Risk

Key species: brown crab, lobsters

Demersal



DATA DRIVEN ASSESSMENT

Generally a stable fishery, notable exceptions are the steady increase in weight of landed bass and the spike in whiting in 2021, which then nearly vanished in 2022.

Overall: Medium Risk

Key species: Bass, Sole, Plaice, Flounder, Dab

CONTEXTUAL ASSESSMENT

EVIDENCE BASE

is very limited, though most of the fishery has favourable ICES advice **Medium risk**

CURRENT REGULATION

is also limited locally, but strong national measures and FMPs are in development: **Medium risk**

ECOSYSTEM IMPACTS

from demersal gear is high due to highly effective bottom-towed gear. However, restricted areas mitigate the risk **Medium risk**.

FISHERIES PERFORMANCE

is uncertain due to shortage of data. Economic importance is significant but small-scale: **Medium risk**

Dogfish & Sharks



DATA DRIVEN ASSESSMENT

Very low landings of Lesser Spotted Dogfish, though prices have increased lately. Smoothhound landings steadily climbing

Overall: Low Risk

Key species: Lesser Spotted Dogfish

CONTEXTUAL ASSESSMENT

EVIDENCE BASE

is very limited. Under-10m catch recording may mitigate, but catch for bait is a concern: **Medium risk**

CURRENT REGULATION

is extensive, with no-take restrictions on most sharks. Dogfish are less protected but have high survivability. Possible Spurdog fishery. FMPs upcoming: **Low risk**

ECOSYSTEM IMPACTS

are low, with generally low impact gear used and small proportion of UK landings: **Low risk**.

FISHERIES PERFORMANCE

is generally favourable (ICES advice) for species that aren't under no-take restrictions. Low weight fishery, though catch for bait is a concern: **Low risk**

Pelagic



Overall: Low Risk

Key species: Herring, Mackerel, Sprat

DATA DRIVEN ASSESSMENT

Significant increase in landings of herring in 2022. Otherwise a variable fishery, with other species on the lower end of average landed weight. Prices stable

CONTEXTUAL ASSESSMENT

EVIDENCE BASE

is very limited. Under-10m catch recording may mitigate, but ICES advice is favourable and fisheries are marginal **Low risk**

CURRENT REGULATION

consists of minimum landing sizes. Some indication MLS may be too large, but low activity mitigates risk: **Low risk**

ECOSYSTEM IMPACTS

are low, with generally low impact gear used and small proportion of UK landings: **Low risk**

FISHERIES PERFORMANCE

is variable but far below MSY. Disturbance from seals should be monitored: **Medium risk**

Shrimps / Prawns



Overall: Medium Risk

Key species: Brown shrimp

DATA DRIVEN ASSESSMENT

Landings highly variable, but have been low during 2021 and 2022. Price is also variable, but was at the higher during 2022

CONTEXTUAL ASSESSMENT

EVIDENCE BASE

is of mixed quality. VMS does not provide full fleet coverage and data provided by fishing industry is limited. Eastern IFCA catch returns monitoring & database now in place: **High risk**

CURRENT REGULATION

is adequate, with the Shrimp Permit Byelaw approved and ready to implement, and returns required accounting for every day: **Medium risk**

ECOSYSTEM IMPACTS

are generally high from shrimp trawling gear. However restricted areas, MSC accreditation and Shrimp Permit Byelaw mitigate the risk: **Medium risk**.

FISHERIES PERFORMANCE

is variable, with low landings in the last two years. These are thought to be because of market demand and competition from Dutch fleets, rather than fishery health. **Medium risk**

Skates and Rays



Overall: **Medium Risk**

Key species:
Thornback ray

DATADRIVENASSESSMENT

Steady downward trend in landings since 2018, with prices increasing

CONTEXTUALASSESSMENT

EVIDENCE BASE

is hindered by identification issues. Under-10m catch recording should mitigate, along with quota system requiring identification: **Medium risk**

CURRENT REGULATION

is through negotiated quotas with EU & Norway. MLS in place in neighbouring district. FMPs upcoming: **Medium risk**

ECOSYSTEM IMPACTS

are generally not a concern, although gillnet usage does pose some potential risks: **Medium risk**.

FISHERIES PERFORMANCE

is uncertain due to lack of data and species are susceptible to pressure, but landings are low: **Medium risk**

Whelks



Overall: **Medium Risk**

Key species:
Whelk

DATADRIVENASSESSMENT

One of the major fisheries by weight, downward trendsince 2019 (54% drop 2019-2022), though this is driven by a peak in 2017. Prices stable

CONTEXTUALASSESSMENT

EVIDENCE BASE

is improving, data is being collected and projects are being run regarding Landings per Unit Effort and Size of Maturity, but more work needed: **Medium risk**

CURRENT REGULATION

is adequate, a permit mechanism is in place, effort gear and MLS all managed. FMPs upcoming. Some concerns exist regarding MLS: **Medium risk**

ECOSYSTEM IMPACTS

are generally low in potting fisheries. Degree of interaction in this fishery with Cromer MCZ is not fully known, and risks crab being used as bait for whelk poses some risk: **Medium risk**.

FISHERIES PERFORMANCE

shows significant landed weight and concerns exist regarding sustainability as ease of access for the fishery and slow recovery of whelks raises risk: **High risk**

Annual Priorities



The Strategic Assessment 2023 identified the following 'high priority' workstreams which require completion to mitigate associated risks.

1. To ensure that the conservation objectives of Marine Protected Areas in the district are furthered

Implementation of management measures for 'red-risk' gear/feature interactions

Continued implementation of an Adaptive Risk Management (ARM) of Cromer Shoal Chalk Beds (MCZ)

Completion of 'amber/green' gear/feature interactions and development / implementation of mitigation where required

2. Management of Wash cockle and mussel fisheries (wild capture and private)

Confirmation of the Wash Cockle and Mussel Byelaw to enable management of wild capture fisheries

Implementation of Wash Cockle and Mussel Byelaw access policies (transition)

Develop appropriate management of private shellfish aquaculture within The Wash

3. Obtaining better fisheries data

Implementation of I-VMS for all fisheries and specifically the Wash Shrimp fishery

4. Support the delivery of Fisheries Management Plans

Contributing to the development of Fisheries Management Plans

Business critical

The following workstreams represent ongoing, 'business as usual' tasks which are required to continue to mitigate associated risks.

1. Marine Protected Areas management, industry viability and stock sustainability

Effort monitoring within the Wash and North Norfolk Coast SAC including, and permit scheme administration

SWEEP (Study of the Wash Embayment, Environment and Productivity) to inform private aquaculture management

Wash cockle and mussel surveys and Management

Shrimp fishery management (MSC accreditation commitments)

Development of measures to address the sustainability of whelk stocks

Complete HRAs in relation to 'unplanned' fisheries

Advice in relation to the risk of conflicts with other marine users

2. Enforcement & Engagement

Compliance monitoring and engagement in accordance with the Compliance Risk Register and TCG

Engagement and education with RSAs on minimum sizes and applicable local and national regulation

3. Biosecurity

Monitoring of district-wide biosecurity risk

4. Partnership working

Continue and expand collaborative work with partner organisations

Future Workstreams

Explore initiatives to invigorate the herring fishery through participation in promotional/awareness raising campaign

Review of Mussel Fishery Fisheries Management Plan

If required reassess need to deliver 'unregulated netting'

Continue dialogue with MMO and other partner organisations to develop 'joined-up' approach to gathering fisheries data from fishers

Assessment of and development of management measures in relation to crab and lobster fisheries sustainability

Consider formalising the Eastern IFCA position into an Aquaculture Strategy

measures in the context of BNAs

Investigate shrimp fishing activity outside of Wash and North Norfolk Coast SAC

Development of relationships with RSA to obtain more fisheries data, including consideration of the added value of developing a RSA Strategy

Implementation of electronic/app based returns system (to be incorporated with MMO under 10's catch returns if possible).

Develop mechanism to monitor levels of Lesser Spotted Dogfish use as bait

Review the Humber estuary cockle byelaw (inherited from North Eastern Sea Fisheries Committee)

Gather information regarding recreational hand gathering

Investigate requirement/applicability of Netting permit

Development of Monitoring and Control Plans

Investigate cockle & mussel die-off

The Strategic Assessment 2023 identified the following potential future workstreams, completion of which would mitigate emerging, future or lower level risks and could deliver added benefit to existing workstreams.

