

Cromer Shoal MCZ Project Board Meeting Notes

Meeting Time/Date:	15 15 hrs 20 th September 2022	Venue:	Via Microsoft Teams
Attendees:	Jennifer Love, Natural England Alice Tebb, Agents of Change Luke Godwin, Eastern IFCA Jon Butler, Eastern IFCA John Davies, Fishing industry Inge Smith, Eastern IFCA member Julian Gregory, Eastern IFCA Samantha Hormbrey, Eastern IFCA Judith Stoutt, Eastern IFCA Ron Jessop, Eastern IFCA Kristina Gurova, Eastern IFCA	Apologies:	None

New Actions Arising and Ongoing Actions			
Actions		Owner	Update
<i>No new actions arose during this meeting.</i>			
23/5/2022	Research & Development T&F Group to update the precautionary rugged chalk area by incorporating the additional data (from ROV and Cefas multibeam study).	SH/RJ	20/9/2022 Ongoing. SH has been progressing this workstream and looking to get input from NE.

Completed Actions from Previous Meetings			
Actions		Owner	Update
4/4/2022	JSt to start an exploratory conversation with UEA about potential support for research into the wider societal importance of the crab and lobster potting fisheries to the local area.	JSt	20/9/2022 Complete . JSt and AT have had a meeting with MCS meeting with Alice and Sue Ranger to discuss developing a proposal. This still needs further elaboration. DECISION: To progress the societal value study as a partnership arrangement with MCS.
4/7/22	KG/SH to follow up with Orsted about how fishermen can sign up to Fishing for Litter so that this information can be shared by IFCOs.	KG/SH	20/9/2022 Complete . SH just been speaking with Orsted. fishermen need to contact fisheries liaison officer Ady Woods to sign up. Orsted are putting together information materials about Fishing for Litter and will share with Eastern IFCA for circulation to fishing industry.
4/7/22	KG to prepare a newsletter-style update within the next two weeks and to share with PB for review and input. The date of the next meeting will be confirmed in the update to provide reassurance to stakeholders.	KG/All	9/20/2022 Complete . The newsletter has been shared with the Stakeholder Group and made publicly available on Eastern IFCA's website.
4/7/22	AT to share details of the NNDC's Motion for the Ocean event in September with PB	AT	20/9/2022 Complete . The meeting notes conflated two different things – Motion for the Ocean and NNDC's Green Build Event. AT put together a pre-recorded presentation about what the MCZ is for Green Build. She is waiting to hear back on attendance and numbers.

Progress updates and new actions and decisions

Research & Development Task & Finish Group Update

- Using the methods developed last year, further ROV surveys have been conducted over the summer. These include short tows aimed at collecting habitat/feature data to improve our chart mapping the extent of the sensitive chalk features and free-flight dives following shanks of gear to improve our knowledge of gear/feature interactions. These surveys have been very successful, enabling us to collect data from approximately three times as many dives/tows as last year (a total of 170 dives this year).
- Altitude data has also been collected from the ROV, which Cefas hope to use to enhance their seabed rugosity data.
- The surveys have generated a great deal of video footage that requires analysis. This will be done using Biigle software that allows videos to be annotated with features, biota, gear and impacts etc. All of the videos have been uploaded onto a video hosting platform ready to be annotated. Annotation has begun, but will be a lengthy process. Two volunteers have assisted with some of this.
- Natural England provided funding for last year's videos to be analysed by an external consultancy, SeaStar. They have indicated further funding could be available this year to assist with further processing.
- RJ noted that a lot of progress has been made in terms of habitat mapping since NE's advice was received. Much of what was originally thought to be "rugged" chalk is actually flat chalk with an occasional boulder. These areas do not appear to be showing damage. The Research Group is working to delineate where these areas are from where damage is occurring/concentrated.
- JL noted that Cefas are looking at historic mapping under an existing contract. If Eastern IFCA has details and parameters for Cefas to cross-reference, this can be done sooner rather than later.
- There was some discussion about the data quality of ROV footage in view of the conclusions of the SeaStar report. It was noted that although the data is technically 'poor' according to general definitions, and it is not good enough for distinguishing species, it is good enough for the purpose that it is being used for i.e. to identify seabed features for habitat mapping purposes and damage to such features.
- Eastern IFCA have bought a shank of pots with which we planned to test the effectiveness of adaptive gear (soft-armouring on pots and floats on the drop lines). These were planned to be deployed and monitored in August but the fisherman assisting with this had mechanical issues that prevented them being deployed and further planned surveys have been called off because of

	<p>weather. If the weather is favourable, it is hoped these can be deployed in October. JD noted that he is trialling these gear adaptations on one of his shanks and that with enough warning he</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vehicle trackers are still being deployed voluntarily on about a third of the vessels fishing within the MCZ. These are helping to build our knowledge of fishing practices within the MCZ. • Bio-sampling is being conducted twice monthly aboard a commercial potting vessel to compare catch composition between gear set on and off rugged chalk areas. • It was suggested that the bio sampling study with its current parameters may not be sufficient to capture the differences in quality between crab caught on the rugged chalk and further offshore. It was noted that the plan is to further explore the quality aspect and how to capture that. • A joint project is currently being discussed with the Blue Marine Foundation to study the impacts of natural change in the MCZ and how this compares to change which is resultant from potting activities. If it goes ahead, this will be a long-term project (3-years minimum) that would monitor changes occurring within three closed areas compared to three open areas. Blue Marine are developing a proposed methodology that will be circulated and discussed in detail at the October R&D TF group meeting. • Natural England is still reviewing Eastern IFCA's potting assessment. There is a need to clarify what is meant by short-, medium- and long-term timescales in relation to risk to the conservation objectives of the site and what the goals are in relation to those timescales. NE noted that potting as an activity is having an individual impact and this needs to be understood in the wider context of natural change and other factors. NE understands that answering these questions will take a long time. The expectation is that Eastern IFCA will bring in a level of management (e.g. effort management and gear adaptation) ahead of having all of the answers in order to mitigate risk. NE's duties are to advise based on what we know and to be precautionary in the face of unknowns. However, it is acknowledged that there are certain timescales that are beyond Eastern IFCA's control, such as those relating to the byelaw-making process. • It was suggested that because the activity is continuing as normal, some stakeholders' perceptions are that nothing is being done, despite the huge amount of resource going into ARM. It was questioned whether a more precautionary approach should be taken to managing potting while collecting evidence but concluded that this would not be an appropriate driver for management intervention.
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Management Task & Finish Group update	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A scoping exercise with the fishing industry (essentially the first phase in an informal consultation) about management measures and a byelaw is underway. The plan is to have this completed by mid-October and to then launch a second phase with written comms, which will also be opened to wider stakeholders. • The Code of Best Practice is in place along with a process for notifying loss and retrieval by the fishing industry. We are also receiving a lot of reports from beach cleaners. The purpose is to build an evidence base about occurrence, seasonality and hotspots and to inform management. The various processes are intended to be iterative and refined over time. • The next priority workstream is integrating the diving element into the process. A divers' protocol was put forward some time ago which includes various options for actions that divers can take, ranging from surveying to making gear safe. The divers involved have asked for fishing industry feedback to help refine the protocol and make it fit for purpose. A key element is agreeing on the criteria for lost gear. • A meeting between divers and fishermen was scheduled for divers to present their ideas, however the industry representative scheduled to attend had a conflicting appointment. Eastern IFCA is now taking a different approach towards getting industry feedback through one-to-one dialogue about the proposal.
Stakeholder Group (SG) update	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The SG has been advertised through NNDC Greenbuild 2022 virtual event • A virtual Q&A on topics covered in Eastern IFCA's newsletter is planned for mid-October. It has been a while since the last SG meeting and the Q&A will be an opportunity for stakeholders to ask questions. The newsletter has been sent to the Stakeholder Group via email. AT has not yet received much feedback from it, except from IS who has had difficulties accessing some of the links. • A face-to-face meeting is being planned for early-mid November 2022. This will be focused on management and the development of the byelaw for the MCZ. • AT intends to do a gap analysis of the SG to see if there are stakeholders missing that we would like to invite. Fishing industry have participated to a far lesser extent, and this is another driver for holding an in-person meeting. • JD noted that fishing industry members are unlikely to want to discuss the byelaw at an SG meeting. Fishermen are more inclined to discuss their views with Eastern IFCA officers and Natural England due to commercially sensitive information. Many in industry are deeply concerned about their

	<p>livelihoods and are unlikely to understand the need to involve wider stakeholders in discussions around a byelaw that will regulate fishing activity.</p>
Evidence Review Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SH is liaising with individual members of the group and is planning meetings around distinct workstreams and contributions.
Highlights and exceptions – project progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Potting assessment</u>: Eastern IFCA are awaiting advice from NE. We will need to consider the resource that will be required to respond to NE advice. We also need to consider that there are probably parts of the assessment that we can now update as we have gathered further evidence since it was submitted. • <u>ROV surveys</u>: We are coming to the end of the survey season, though there may be an opportunity to conduct more surveys in October. It is important to recognise the significant drain on resources that surveys have had. Officers have had to prioritise planning and completing surveys which has meant that other work has not progressed (e.g. rugged chalk review). As we are coming to the end of the survey season there will be a significant drive to analyse footage and pick these workstreams back up. • <u>Adaptive gear trials</u>: We have not been able to progress this year. There were delays in actually getting the experimental pots, which eventually arrived in August. We had hoped to survey the gear in September but due to various complications ((logistical/technical/weather-related) the surveys have not been able to go ahead. It is unlikely that we will be able to survey the experimental gear this year. • <u>Voluntary Partnership Agreement on Reporting, Recovery and Disposal of ALDFG</u>: This is in progress but slightly delayed due to competing priorities • <u>Crab and Lobster Potting Byelaw</u>: The scoping exercise with fishing industry has been delayed but is ongoing. We are still looking take the byelaw to the Authority in December but there is a possibility that this will need to be postponed due to high levels of demand on officer time. • Heavy workloads, including unforeseeable work relating to this year's cockle fishery have impacted on resources.
A0B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NE have been receiving a lot of requests about Cromer, including a request under the Freedom of Information Act and a meeting request from MCNAG.
Date of next meeting	<p>1515hrs on 29th November 2022.</p>

Decision Log		
Date	Decision	Update
2/2/2022	PB meeting notes will be succinct and will show key updates and actions and decisions to support the business-like nature of PB meetings.	N/A
2/2/2022	The Chairs of the two Task and Finish Groups will provide bullet point updates at each SG meeting.	N/A
4/4/2022	Based on Management T&F Group's formal recommendation, a decision to begin the byelaw drafting process was formally taken by the Project Board.	23/5/2022 Informal consultation comms are in development
4/4/2022	A 'decision log' will be added to the meeting notes to keep track of decisions taken, as distinct from updates on actions from previous meetings.	NA
23/5/2022	The amended Stakeholder Group ToRs and Code of Conduct are to go back to the Stakeholder Group for deliberation and agreement.	
23/5/22	Moving forward, tracker data will be cross-referenced against ROV footage to enable impacts to be assessed.	N/A
20/9/2022	Progress the societal value study as a partnership arrangement with MCS.	